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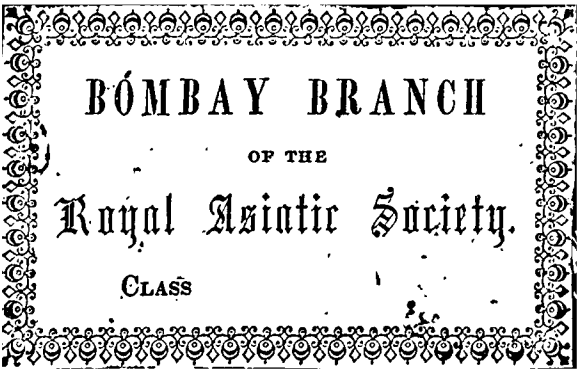

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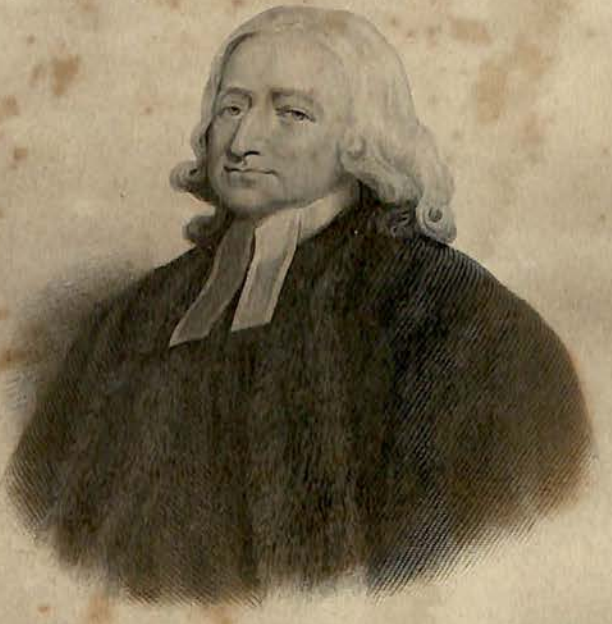
LIFE AND TIMES

OF THE

REV. JOHN WESLEY, M.A.



JOHN WESLEY, M.A.

AGED 85.

From a Painting by Romney

(see page 565.)

THE

LIFE AND TIMES

OF THE

REV. JOHN WESLEY, M.A.,

Founder of the Methodists.

BY THE

REV. L. TYERMAN,

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE AND TIMES OF REV. S. WESLEY, M.A."

(Father of the Revds. J. and C. Wesley.)

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THE LIFE AND TIMES

OF

THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, M.A.

1768.

1768
Age 65

DURING the year 1768, Charles Wesley, with his brother's full concurrence, removed his family from Bristol to London, which henceforth was his place of residence.[1] Whitefield spent the first half of the year in the metropolis. In July, he set out for Scotland; but, about a month after, returned to London to inter his wife, who died on August 9. His health was somewhat feeble; but he continued to itinerate and preach to the utmost of his power. His orphan house in America, and Lady Huntingdon's college at Trevecca, demanded his attention, and had it. He and Wesley were still warm hearted friends; and yet there seems to have been a shade of coldness come over them. Hence the following, written when the year was closing.

"TABERNACLE, *December* 28, 1768.

"REVEREND AND VERY DEAR SIR,—Pray have you or I committed the unpardonable sin, because we differ in particular cases, and act according to our consciences? I imagine the common salvation is not promoted by keeping at such a distance. Enemies rejoice. Halfway friends especially are pleased.

"You will be glad to hear, that the time for completing the orphan house affair seems to be come. Do you know of a good, judicious, spiritual tutor? Will you, without delay, make the first present of your works to the library? I hope we shall have a nursery for true Christian ministers. I know you will say Amen. Yesterday I was fifty-four years old. God be merciful to me a sinner! Though you are older, I trust you will not get the start of me, by going to heaven, before, reverend and very dear sir, less than the least of all, "GEORGE WHITEFIELD."[2]

[1] C. Wesley's Life, vol. ii., p. 242.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1783, p. 684.

1768 Age 65 Another letter, of the same kind, was addressed to Wesley, on New Year's day, by his old friend at Everton.

"EVERTON, *January* 1, 1768.

"DEAR SIR,—I see no reason why we should keep at a distance, whilst we continue servants of the same Master, and especially when Lot's herdsmen are so ready to lay their staves on our shoulders. Though my hand has been mute, my heart is kindly affected towards you. I trust we agree in essentials; and, therefore, should leave each other at rest with his circumstantials. I am weary of all disputes, and desire to know nothing but Jesus; to love Him, trust Him, and serve Him; to choose and find Him my only portion. I would have Him my meat, my drink, my clothing, my sun, my shield, my Lord, my God, my all. Amen.

"When I saw you in town, I gave you an invitation to Everton; and I now repeat it, offering you very kindly the use of my house and church. The Lord accompany you in all your journeys! Kind love to your brother. Adieu!

"JOHN BERRIDGE."[1]

At the close of the year 1767, the Earl of Buchan died triumphing in the faith of Christ. He had been in the habit of hearing Whitefield, the Wesleys, and others, at Bath, and had felt their ministry a blessing. His last words were, "Happy, happy, happy!" The inscription upon his coffin run thus: "His life was honourable, his death blessed; he sought earnestly peace with God,—he found it with unspeakable joy, alone in the merits of Christ Jesus, witnessed by the Holy Spirit to his soul."[2] His countess dowager was a woman of deep piety, of elegant taste, and of great genius. She was the mother of a numerous family, and appointed Venn, Berridge, and Wesley her domestic chaplains. This was done through the intervention of Lady Huntingdon,[3] to whom Wesley addressed the following letter.

"LONDON, *January* 4, 1768.

"MY DEAR LADY,—I am obliged to your ladyship, and to Lady Buchan, for such a mark of your regard as I did not at all expect. I purpose to return her ladyship thanks by this post.

"That remark is very striking, as well as just;—If it is the Holy Spirit that bears witness, then all speaking against that Witness is one species of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. And when this is done by those who profess to honour Him, it must in a peculiar manner grieve that

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1857, p. 616.
[2] "Life and Times of Countess of Huntingdon," vol. i., p. 17.
[3] Ibid. vol. ii., p. 427.

blessed Spirit. Yet, I have been surprised to observe how many, who affirm salvation by faith, have lately run into this; running full into Mr. Sandeman's notion, that faith is merely an assent to the Bible; and not only undervaluing, but even ridiculing, the whole experience of the children of God. I rejoice, that your ladyship is still preserved from that spreading contagion, and also enabled plainly and openly to avow the plain, old, simple, unfashionable gospel. 1768 Age 65

"Wishing your ladyship many happy years, I remain, my dear lady, your very affectionate servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

A few months after this, Wesley went to Scotland, where the Countess of Buchan resided, and there wrote, and probably preached, his remarkable sermon, "The Good Steward," in which, with great emphasis, he lays down the doctrine, that we hold *in trust* our souls, our bodies, our goods, and all our other talents; and, for the *use* of them, must render an account at the judgment seat of Christ. This was dealing faithfully with his noble patroness, as well as with others; for the sermon was immediately published in 12mo, 24 pages, with the title, "The Good Steward. A Sermon, by John Wesley, Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Countess Dowager of Buchan."

Wesley was not the man to be elated by being noticed by the rich, the noble, and the great. He was thankful for their help; but far from being proud of their approbation. Many of his most trusted friends were poor and mean in reference to this world's goods; but, at the same time, were possessed of riches incomparably superior to all the gold existing. The following letter, addressed to Fletcher of Madeley, though a month or two out of its chronological order, refers to these and to other matters.

"BIRMINGHAM, *March* 20, 1768.

"DEAR SIR,—Mr. Eastbrook told me yesterday, that you are sick of the conversation even of them who profess religion,—that you find it quite unprofitable, if not hurtful, to converse with them, three or four hours together, and are sometimes almost determined to shut yourself up, as the less evil of the two.

"I do not wonder at it at all, especially considering with whom you have chiefly conversed for some time past, namely, the hearers of Mr. Madan, or Mr. Bourian, perhaps I might add, of Mr. Whitefield. The conversing with these I have rarely found to be profitable to my soul.

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1857, p. 693.

1768 Age 65 Rather it has damped my desires; it has cooled my resolutions, and I have commonly left them with a dry, dissipated spirit.

"And how can you expect it to be otherwise? For do we not naturally catch their spirit with whom we converse? And what spirit can we expect them to be of, considering the preaching they sit under? Some happy exceptions I allow; but, in general, do men gather grapes of thorns? Do they gather constant, universal self denial, the patience of hope, the labour of love, inward and outward self devotion, from the doctrine of absolute decrees, of irresistible grace, of infallible perseverance? Do they gather these fruits from antinomian doctrine? Or from any that borders upon it? Do they gather them from that *amorous way* of praying to Christ? or that *luscious* way of preaching His righteousness? I never found it so. On the contrary, I have found, that even the precious doctrine of salvation by faith has need to be guarded with the utmost care, or those who hear it will slight both inward and outward holiness.

"I will go a step farther: I seldom find it profitable for *me* to converse with any who are not athirst for perfection, and who are not big with earnest expectation of receiving it every moment. Now you find none of these among those we are speaking of; but many, on the contrary, who are in various ways, directly and indirectly, opposing the whole work of God,—that work, I mean, which God is carrying on, throughout this kingdom, by unlearned and plain men; in consequence of which His influence must, in some measure, be withdrawn from them. Again: you have, for some time, conversed a good deal with the genteel Methodists. Now it matters not a straw what doctrine they hear,—whether they frequent the Lock or West Street. They are, almost all, salt which has lost its savour, if ever they had any. They are thoroughly conformed to the maxims, the spirit, the fashions, and customs of the world. Certainly then, '*Nunquam ad eos homines ibis quin minor homo redibis.*'

"But were these or those of ever so excellent a spirit, you conversed with them too long. One had need to be an angel, not a man, to converse three or four hours at once, to any purpose. In the latter part of such conversation, we shall doubtless lose all the profit we had gained before.

"But have you not a remedy for all this in your hands? In order to truly profitable conversation, may you not select persons clear both of Calvinism and antinomianism? not fond of that luscious way of talking, but standing in awe of Him they love; who are vigorously working out their salvation, and are athirst for full redemption, and every moment expecting it, if not already enjoying it? It is true, these will generally be poor and mean, seldom possessed of either riches or learning, unless there be now and then a *rara avis in terris:* a Miss March, or Betty Johnson. If you converse with these, humbly and simply, an hour at a time, with prayer before and prayer after, you will not complain of the unprofitableness of conversation, or find any need of turning hermit.

"As to the conference, at Worcester, on lay preaching, do not you

observe almost all the lay preachers—(1) Are connected with me? and—(2) Are maintainers of universal redemption? *Hinc illæ lacrymæ!* These gentlemen do not love *me*, and do love particular redemption. 1768 Age 65 "If these laymen were connected with them, or if they were Calvinists, all would be well. Therefore, I should apprehend you will have two things to do:—1. Urge the argument, the strength of which I believe is in the Second Appeal, and, above all, in the Letter to a Clergyman. 2. Apply to the conscience, 'You do not love Mr. Wesley enough: you love your opinions too much; otherwise this debate would never have arisen: for it is undeniable, these quacks cure whom we cannot cure, they save sinners all over the nation. God is with them, and works by them, and has done so for near these thirty years. Therefore, the opposing them is neither better nor worse than fighting against God.'

"I am your ever affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

One more letter may be introduced, before we turn to Wesley's journal. At the beginning of 1768, a third son was born to Charles Wesley, and it was naturally the wish of such a father, that one of his three sons might become a minister of Christ,—a wish, however, that was not realised. Wesley alludes to this, and to the yearly collections and other things, in the following to his brother, showing that Charles either seldom attended conference, or, if he did attend, took little interest in its financial matters.

"LONDON, *January* 15, 1768.

"DEAR BROTHER,—Six or seven hundred pounds is brought to a conference: of which five hundred at least pays the debt.[2] Then extraordinary demands are answered. How much remains for law? I am now near £300 out of pocket, which I borrowed to pay Mr. Pardon. When I receive some more from Newcastle, I will send it to Bristol; probably very soon.

"It is highly probable, one of the three will stand before the Lord. But, so far as I can learn, such a thing has scarce been for these thousand

[1] Manuscript letter.

[2] The meaning of this is, that, at least, £500 of what the Methodists have always technically designated "The Yearly Collection," was, at this period, employed in paying chapel debts. Except that for Kingswood school, this was the only connexional collection that Wesley had; and he strongly insisted that *every* Methodist should render it support. In an *unpublished* letter, addressed to Matthew Lowes, and dated March 11, 1762, Wesley writes: "In the enclosed papers, (which you may read in every society, just before you meet the classes,) you will see the design of the general yearly collection, to which *every* Methodist in England is to contribute something. If there is any who cannot give a halfpenny a year, another will give it for him."

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years, as a son, father, grandfather, *atavus*, *tritavus*, preaching the gospel, nay, and the genuine gospel, in a line. You know, Mr. White, sometime chairman of the Assembly of Divines, was my grandmother's father.

"Look upon our little ones at Kingswood as often as you can. A word from you will be a quickening to them. Oh how many talents are we entrusted with. We have need to gird up the loins of our mind, and run faster the small remainder of our race. 'One thing!'—let us mind one thing only; and nothing great or small, but as it ministers to it! Peace be with you and yours! Adieu! "JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Wesley's first journey from London, in 1768, was on the 18th of February, to Chatham. Methodism of some sort had existed here for a considerable time. As early as 1751, the *Gentleman's Magazine* relates, that a man and his wife at Chatham, both of them being Methodists, had hanged themselves; and that, in order to prove the man a lunatic, his friends produced, to the coroner's jury, the New Testament, on a roll of paper, which the man had written with his blood.[2]

Wesley writes: "Thursday, February 18—Having been importunately pressed thereto, I rode through a keen east wind to Chatham. About six in the evening, I preached at the barracks, in what they call the church. It is a large room, in which the chaplain reads prayers, and preaches now and then. It was soon as hot as an oven, through the multitude of people; some hundreds of whom were soldiers; and they were 'all ear,' as Mr. Boston says, scarcely allowing themselves to breathe. Even between five and six the next morning, the room was warm enough. I suppose upwards of two hundred soldiers were a part of the audience. Many of these are already warring a good warfare."

This was Wesley's first visit to Chatham; but not his last. From the beginning, he had loved soldiers, and, to the end, it was always a pleasure to preach to them.

On March 6, he set out on his long northern journey, which occupied the next five months. A few jottings respecting it may be acceptable.

At Gloucester, a "noisy and mischievous mob" had been

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 126.
[2] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1751, p. 179.

"taken in hand and tamed by an honest magistrate." Cheltenham was "a quiet, comfortable place," despite the "rector and the anabaptist minister." At Worcester, the difficulty was, where to preach, no room being large enough to contain the people, and it being too cold for them to stand in the open air. At length, a friend offered the use of his barn, which "was larger than many churches." "Nothing," says Wesley, "is wanting here but a commodious house." Such a house was built four years afterwards,[1] and lasted till 1812, when good old James M'Kee Byron and the Worcester Methodists were mad enough to build another costing upwards of £8000, the great bulk of which was left to be paid by their successors.[2] 1768 Age 6.

At Evesham, Wesley preached in the parish church; and was announced, by the vicar, to do the same at Pebworth; but "the squire of the parish" interposed an interdict, and therefore he preached in the open air.

At Birmingham, the tumults, of so many years' continuance, were "now wholly suppressed by a resolute magistrate." Here Wesley met "with a venerable monument of antiquity, George Bridgins, in the one hundred and seventh year of his age, still able to walk to preaching, and retaining his senses and understanding tolerably well."

On Sunday, March 20, Wesley preached at West Bromwich, where a small society of about twenty persons had been kept together by Francis Asbury, a native of a neighbouring parish, but afterwards the Methodist bishop of the United States.

Five years before, at Wolverhampton, the mob had levelled the Methodist meeting-house to the ground, and four young fellows concerned in the outrage had been sent to prison;[3] but now, says Wesley "all was quiet: only those who could not get into the house made a little noise for a time; and some hundreds attended me to my lodging; but it was with no other intent than to stare."

Wesley pronounces Newcastle under Lyne "one of the prettiest towns in England." Though it was extremely cold, the largeness of the congregation constrained him to preach in

[1] Myles's History.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1825, p. 122; and 1829, p. 585.
[3] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1763, p. 463.

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the open air; "a more attentive or better behaved congregation" he "scarce ever saw." Sixteen years later, Newcastle had a society of one hundred and nine members, the leaders of whom were John Glynn, William Bayley, Robert Keeling, and Thomas Bamfield.[1]

At Burslem, on March 25, he opened the new chapel; and, at Congleton, had "an elegant, yet earnestly attentive congregation," the behaviour of the society having won the approbation of all the people in the town, except "the curate, who still refused to give the sacrament to any who would not promise to hear the Methodist preachers no more."

For nine years past, the Methodists had been wont to meet in a room provided by Dr. Troutbeck, behind his own residence; and here they had been subjected to the same sort of outrages that most towns in the kingdom thought it their duty to commit upon the Methodists. Drums were beaten to disturb their services; dogs were let loose in their congregations; and rotten eggs and filth were often hurled at them in plentiful profusion; but, by their godly behaviour, they had outlived all this, and now had a galleried chapel, capable of containing about four hundred persons.

Wesley spent Sunday, March 27, at Macclesfield, where he preached to "thousands upon thousands." A few years before, George Pearson and Elizabeth Clulow had opened a preaching house, which would hold forty people, and which, to prevent ejectment, they secured to themselves for forty years. "Ah, George!" said Mrs. Clulow, when they first went into it, "we shall never be able to fill the place; why, it will hold forty folk;" to which Mr. Pearson replied, "I'll warrant you; hold up your heart." The result was as George predicted. In a month the room was crammed, and a hole was cut through the chamber floor, so that the preacher might, at the same time, address those above as well as those below. Soon after this, Mr. Ryles gave ground and materials for a chapel, on condition that Mrs. Clulow would pay the workmen their wages for building it. This was done in 1764, and now, in 1768, Methodism in Macclesfield was fairly started.[2]

[1] Burslem old circuit book.
[2] Manuscript.

From Macclesfield, Wesley proceeded to Stockport, Manchester, and New Mills. He writes: "Wednesday, March 30—I rode to a little town called New Mills, and preached in their large new chapel, which has a casement in every window, three inches square! That is the custom of the country!" This well ventilated chapel was built principally by Mr. and Mrs. Beard, the parents of the wife of the late T. Holy, Esq., of Sheffield.[1] 1768 Age 65

Coming to Liverpool, on April 6, Wesley says: "We had a huge congregation at Liverpool; but some pretty, gay, fluttering things did not behave with so much good manners as the mob at Wigan. The congregations in general were quite well behaved, as well as large, both morning and evening; and I found the society both more numerous and more lively than ever it was before."

One of these "huge congregations," after a sermon by Wesley, on Sunday, April 10, were munificent enough to make a collection amounting to £1 4*s.* 9*d.*; and the society, which was more numerous and lively than ever, aided by the general congregations, managed to contribute, in their classes and at public collections, from September 1, 1768, to January 16, 1769, the sum of £10 17*s.* 5*d.* for the support of the work of God among them.[2] Such was Liverpool Methodism a hundred years ago!

On April 19, Wesley arrived in Glasgow, and says: "We have few societies in Scotland like this. The greater part of the members not only have found peace with God, but continue to walk in the light of His countenance. That wise and good man, Mr. Gillies, has been of great service to them, encouraging them to abide in the grace of God." Three years before this, Thomas Taylor had been sent to Glasgow, and, after travelling several hundreds of miles to his appointment, had, as his first congregation, two bakers' boys and two old women, which congregation, however, kept increasing till it reached about two hundred. Taylor tells us, that for want of means he never kept so many fast days as he did in Glasgow; and, though he ultimately obtained a preaching

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1812, p. 534; and 1843, p. 89.
[2] Liverpool old society book.

1768 Age 65 room, and formed a society, and engaged to pay a precentor fourpence for each service at which he led off the psalms, he found it so difficult to raise the money that he dismissed the psalms and the psalm singer all together. He left behind him, however, a society of seventy members.

One of these was Robert Mackie, who, for thirty years, acted as a faithful classleader; and another was a poor old woman, concerning whom John Pawson, in an unpublished letter, tells the following story. Meeting in the street the minister of the kirk she had been accustomed to attend, she was thus accosted: "Oh, Janet, where have ye been, woman? I have no seen ye at the kirk for long." "I go," said Janet, "among the Methodists." "Among the Methodists!" quoth the minister; "why what gude get ye there, woman?" "Glory to God!" replied Janet, "I do get gude; for God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven me aw my sins!" "Ah, Janet," said the minister, "be not highminded, but fear; the devil is a cunning adversary." "I dunna care a button for the deevil," answered Janet, "I 've gotten him under my feet. I ken the deevil can do muckle deal, but there is ane thing he canna do." "What is that, Janet?" "He canna shed abroad the love of God in my heart; and I am sure I 've got it there!" "Weel, weel!" replied the good tempered man, "if ye have got there, Janet, hold it fast, and never let it go!"

Wesley's information was sometimes incorrect. From what he had heard, he expected to find a numerous and lively society at Perth; but, instead of that, he "found not above two believers, and scarce five awakened persons in it."

At Aberdeen, the society was knit together in peace and love, and the congregations large and deeply attentive; but, among them, were "many rude, stupid creatures, who knew as little of reason as of religion," and one of whom threw a potato at Wesley.

Having spent a month in Scotland, Wesley reached Berwick on the 18th of May, and proceeded to Newcastle, in the neighbourhood of which he employed the next ten days.

At Sunderland, he had an interview with Elizabeth Hobson, a young woman of twenty-four years of age; and took down, from her own lips, what he properly designates "one of the strangest accounts that he ever read." The substance of it is

to illustrate her assertion, that, from her childhood, when any of her neighbours died, she used to see them, either just at the time of their decease, or a little previous. He says: "The well known character of Elizabeth Hobson excludes all suspicion of fraud, and the nature of the circumstances themselves excludes the possibility of delusion. The reader may believe the narrative if he pleases; or may disbelieve it, without any offence to me. Meantime, let him not be offended if I believe it, till I see better reason to the contrary." After this follow Elizabeth Hobson's bewildering statements. 1768 Age 65

Wesley has been censured and ridiculed for this credulity. Southey says, "he invalidated his own authority by listening to the most absurd tales and recording them as authenticated facts." Did Wesley deserve this? The reader must not forget the undeniable, though mysterious, supernatural noises in the Epworth rectory. He must also bear in mind, that one of the most striking features in Wesley's religious character was his deep rooted, intense, powerful, and impelling conviction of the dread realities of an unseen world. This great conviction took possession of the man; he loved it, cherished it, tried to instil it into all his helpers and all his people; and, without it, he would never have undertaken the Herculean labour, and endured the almost unparalleled opprobrium, that he did. Besides, his own justification of himself is more easily sneered at than answered. He writes:—

"With my latest breath, will I bear my testimony against giving up to infidels one great proof of the invisible world; I mean, that of witchcraft and apparitions, confirmed by the testimony of all ages. The English, in general, and, indeed, most of the men of learning in Europe, have given up all accounts of witches and apparitions, as mere old wives' fables. I am sorry for it; and I willingly take this opportunity of entering my solemn protest against this violent compliment, which so many that believe the Bible pay to those who do not believe it. I owe them no such service. I take knowledge, these are at the bottom of the outcry which has been raised, and with such insolence spread throughout the nation, in direct opposition not only to the Bible, but to the suffrage of the wisest and best of men in all ages and nations. They well know (whether Christians know it, or not) that the giving up witchcraft is, in effect, giving up the Bible; and they know, on the other hand, that if but one account of the intercourse of men with separate spirits be admitted, their whole castle in the air—deism, atheism materialism—falls to the ground. I know no reason, therefore, why we should suffer even this weapon to be wrested

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out of our hands. Indeed, there are numerous arguments besides this, which abundantly confute their vain imaginations. But we need not be hooted out of one; neither reason nor religion requires this. One of the capital objections to all these accounts is, 'Did you ever see an apparition yourself?' No, nor did I ever see a murder; yet I believe there is such a thing. The testimony of unexceptionable witnesses fully convinces me both of the one and the other."[1]

At the same time, it is only fair to add that, though Wesley was a firm believer in witches and apparitions, he was not the fanatic which some had been before him; hence, in 1769, he writes: "I read Mr. Glanvill's 'Sadducismus Triumphatus;' but some of his relations I cannot receive, and much less his way of accounting for them. All his talk of 'aerial and astral spirits,' I take to be stark nonsense. Indeed, supposing the facts true, I wonder a man of sense should attempt to account for them at all. For who can explain the things of the invisible world, but the inhabitants of it?"

Before proceeding further in Wesley's history, extracts from two or three of his letters, belonging to this period, may be inserted here.

Separation from the Church, and the doctrine of Christian perfection, were points still far from being settled. Hence the following to his brother.

"EDINBURGH, *May* 14, 1768.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I am at my wits' end with regard to two things—the Church, and Christian perfection. Unless both you and I stand in the gap in good earnest, the Methodists will drop them both. Talking will not avail. We must *do*, or be borne away. Will you set shoulder to shoulder? If so, think deeply upon the matter, and tell me what can be done. '*Age, vir esto! nervos intendas tuos.*' Peace be with you and yours! Adieu!

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

A month later, Wesley recurs to the same subject, and congratulates his brother on the results of his removing to London.

"*June* 14, 1768.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I rejoice to hear, from various persons, so good an account of the work of God in London. You did not come thither without the Lord, and you find your labour is not in vain. I doubt not but you will see more and more fruit, while you converse chiefly with them

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiv., p. 276. [2] Ibid. vol. xii., p. 126.

that are athirst for God. I find a wonderful difference in myself when I am among these, and when I am among fashionable Methodists. On this account, the north of England suits me best, where so many are groaning after full redemption. 1768 Age 65

"But what shall we do? I think it is high time, that you and I, at least, should come to a point. Shall we go on in asserting perfection against all the world? Or shall we quietly let it drop? We really must do one or the other; and, I apprehend, the sooner the better. What shall we jointly and explicitly maintain, and recommend to all our preachers, concerning the nature, the time (now or by-and-by), and the manner of it? instantaneous or not? I am weary of intestine war; of preachers quoting one of us against the other. At length, let us fix something for good and all, either the same as formerly, or different from it.—Ερρωσο.

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Dr. Erskine's attack on Wesley has been already mentioned (see Vol. II., p. 530). During Wesley's visit to Scotland, he sought an interview with his opponent, and refers to their points of difference in the following interesting letter to the Rev. Mr. Plendelieth, of Edinburgh.

"*May* 23, 1768.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—Some years ago, it was reported that I recommended the use of a crucifix, to a man under sentence of death. I traced this up to its author, Dr. Stennett, an anabaptist teacher. He was charged with it. He answered, 'Why I saw a crucifix in his cell (a picture of Christ on the cross), and I knew Mr. Wesley used to visit him, so I *supposed* he had brought it.' This is the whole of the matter. Dr. Stennett himself I never saw; nor did I ever see such a picture in the cell; and I believe the whole tale is pure invention.

"I had, for some time, given up the thought of an interview with Mr. Erskine, when I fell into the company of Dr. Oswald. He said, 'Sir, you do not know Mr. Erskine. I know him perfectly well. Send and desire an hour's conversation with him, and I am sure he will understand you better.' I am glad I did send. I have done *my* part, and am now entirely satisfied. I am likewise glad, that Mr. Erskine has spoken his

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 126. All this confusion arose chiefly out of the half insane ravings of Bell and his friends in 1762. In a long, unpublished letter, dated September 29, 1764, Wesley writes: "I never staggered at all at the reveries of George Bell. I saw instantly, at the beginning and from the beginning, what was right and what was wrong; but I saw withal, 'I have many things to speak, but you cannot bear them now.' Hence, many imagined I was *imposed* upon; and applauded themselves in their greater perspicacity; as they do at this day. 'But if you knew it,' says his friend to Gregory Lopez, 'why did you not tell me?' I answer with him, 'I do not speak all I know, but what I judge needful.' Still, I am persuaded, there is no state under heaven from which it is not possible to fall."

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mind. I will answer with all simplicity, in full confidence of satisfying *you*, and all impartial men.

"He objects, (1) That I attack predestination as subversive of all religion, and yet suffer my followers, in *Scotland*, to remain in that opinion.

"Much of this is true. I did attack predestination eight-and-twenty years ago; and I do not believe now any predestination which implies irrespective reprobation. But I do not believe, it is *necessarily subversive* of all religion. I think hot disputes are much more so. Therefore, I never willingly dispute with any one about it; and I advise all my friends, not in Scotland only, but all over England and Ireland, to avoid all contention on the head, and let every man remain in his own opinion. Can any man of candour blame me for this? Is there anything *unfair* or *disingenuous* about it?

"He objects, (2) That I 'assert the attainment of sinless perfection by all that are born of God.' I am sorry, that Mr. Erskine should affirm this again. I need give no other answer than I gave before, in the seventh page of the little tract I sent him two years ago. I do not maintain this. I do not believe it. I believe Christian perfection is not attained by any of the children of God, till they are what the apostle John terms *fathers*; and this I expressly declare in that sermon which Mr. Erskine so largely quotes.

"He objects, (3) That I 'deny the imputation of Christ's active obedience.' Since I believed justification by faith, which I have done upwards of thirty years, I have constantly maintained, that we are pardoned and accepted wholly for the sake of what Christ hath both *done and suffered* for us. Two or three years ago, Mr. Madan's sister showed him what she had wrote down of a sermon which I had preached on this subject. He entreated me to write down the whole and print it, saying, it would satisfy all my opponents. I was not so sanguine as to expect this: I understood mankind too well. However, I complied with his request; a few were satisfied; the rest continued just as they were before.

"As long as Mr. Erskine continues in the mind expressed in his Theological Essays, there is no danger, that he and I should agree, any more than light and darkness. I love and reverence him; but not his doctrine. I dread every approach to antinomianism. I have seen the fruit of it, over the three kingdoms. I never said, that Mr. Erskine and I were agreed. I will make our disagreement as public as ever he pleases: only I must withal specify the particulars. If he *will* fight with me, it must be on this ground; and then let him do what he will, and what he can.

"Retaining a due sense of your friendly offices, and praying for a blessing on all your labours, I remain, reverend and dear sir, your affectionate brother and servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1783, p. 681.

These were mutterings before the storm,—skirmishes before the battle,—a prelude to the great Calvinian controversy of 1770 and onwards. 1768 Age 65

We abruptly turn to another matter. Wesley was a man who believed in the importance of making preparations for dying, in more respects than one. He writes on the last day of the year 1786: "From these words, 'Set thy house in order,' I strongly exhorted all who had not done it already, to settle their temporal affairs without delay. It is a strange madness which still possesses many, that are in other respects men of understanding, who put this off from day to day, till death comes in an hour when they looked not for it."

Wesley acted upon his own advice. He was without money; but he had books, etc.: and to prevent quarrels after he was dead, he made more wills than one respecting their disposal. One executed in 1768 was, of course, different from his last, executed in 1789; and, as something more than a curiosity, we subjoin a verbatim copy, made from the original in Wesley's own handwriting.

"IN the name of God. Amen! I, John Wesley, Clerk, revoking all other, appoint this to be my last Will and Testament.

"I bequeath to my brother Charles Wesley, (but in case of his demise to the School in Kingswood,) my Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, and German books (except those, in any language, in the study at Kingswood School, which I bequeath to the said School; and those in my studies at Bristol, Newcastle upon Tyne, and Dublin, which I desire may remain there for the use of the Travelling Preachers); and all my gowns, cassocks, and bands. To James Morgan, I bequeath my watch; to my faithful Housekeeper, Ann Smith, Mrs. Lefevre's ring; to Mr. Peter Jaco, my bureau at London; to him, to the Rev. William Ley, and to each Travelling Preacher, who has them not already, a set of my Sermons, Appeals, Journals, the Notes on the New Testament, and the book on Original Sin; to the Rev. Mr. James Roquet, all my manuscripts; to my dear friend, Mary Bosanquet, the set of my Works; to my dear daughter, Jane Smith, the 'Christian Library,' now in my study at London.

"I bequeath all my Books, which are for sale, with the sole right of reprinting them, (after paying my brother's Rent Charge upon them,) to Mr. Melchias Teulon, Hatter, Mr. John Horton, Silkdyer, and Mr. John Collinson, Hatter, in Trust, the one moiety for the keeping the Children of Travelling Preachers at the School (to be chosen by the Assistants at the Yearly Conference), the other moiety for the continual relief of the Poor of the United Society in London. Only I bequeath to Christiana

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Simpson,[1] at Aberdeen, the Books which shall remain with her, at the time of my decease.

"Lastly, I bequeath the residue of my Books and Goods to my wife, Mary Wesley. And I appoint the said Melchias Teulon, John Horton, and John Collinson, Executors of this my last Will and Testament.

"Witness my hand and seal,[1] this 27th day of April, 1768,

"JOHN WESLEY.

"Witnesses:

"WILLIAM SMITH.

"THOMAS SIMPSON."

A man's will is a document in which he generally makes mention of his best beloved friends. On this ground, a few notes appended to Wesley's will of 1768 may be useful.

1. Wesley's principal bequest, in 1768, was to Kingswood school, and to the poor of the society in London. In 1789, this bequest was made to "the general fund of the Methodist conference, in carrying on the work of God by itinerant preachers."

2. James Roquet was made the trustee of Wesley's manuscripts in 1768; but, having died during the interim, Dr. Coke, Dr. Whitehead, and Henry Moore were appointed in 1789 to take his place.

3. In 1768, he bequeathed all his gowns, cassocks, and bands to his brother; in 1789, to the clergymen preaching in City Road chapel, London.

4. In 1768, James Morgan was to have his watch; but, in 1789, James Morgan was dead, and Joseph Bradford got it.

5. In 1768, Mrs. Martha Hall had no bequest, for her bad husband was then living; in 1789, he was dead, and hence her legacy of £40.

6. In 1768, there was a legacy for his wife; in 1789, his wife was in her grave.

7. Wesley makes mention of his "dear daughter, Jane Smith." This lady was really his wife's daughter, who was now married to Mr. William Smith, of Newcastle upon Tyne, one of the witnesses.

8. James Roquet, to whom Wesley bequeathed his manuscripts, was the son of a French Protestant refugee, was

[1] Wesley's seal is a dove, having in its mouth an olive branch, and surrounded with the words "Nuncia Pacis."

educated in the Merchant Taylors' school in London, was converted under Whitefield's ministry, graduated at St. John's college, Oxford, became master in Wesley's school at Kingswood, obtained episcopal ordination, and was now curate of St. Werburgh, Bristol. 1768 Age 65

9. The Rev. William Ley, to whom Wesley bequeathed a set of his publications, was, from the year 1760 to 1763, an itinerant preacher. He was then episcopally ordained, and was now the curate of Lakenheath, but likely to be dismissed by the vicar, to whom his Methodistic preaching and procedure were offensive.[1]

10. Of one of the executors of Wesley's will, John Collinson, we can give no particulars.

11. The second, Mr. Teulon, was born at Bromley, in 1734; and was sent to school at Nottingham. At fourteen, he was put apprentice to his uncle, Mr. Wagner, of Pall Mall, hatter to King George II. He was converted under the ministry of Romaine, joined the Methodists, and, in 1761, married Miss Mecham, the daughter of one of the earliest Methodists in London. For four years, he was Wesley's London steward, and was leader of a class. He was a man of some literary taste, and had read most of the best English authors. He died in 1806, respected and beloved by all who knew him.[2]

12. The third executor, John Horton, was a member of the common council of London, sensible, well read, serious without gloom, cheerful without levity, and polite without ceremony. The unhappy differences after Wesley's death induced him to leave the Methodists, and he went to reside at Bristol.[3] He retained his warm attachment, however, to "the *old ship*," as he was accustomed to designate Wesley's system; again attended the Methodist preaching, and, only a few months before his death, when his son was preparing for the university, declared to Henry Moore, that he would "rather see his son a Methodist preacher, than archbishop of Canterbury." He died in peace about the year 1802.[4]

We left Wesley at Newcastle. On the 31st of May, he set

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1805, p. 277. [2] Ibid. 1808, p. 297.
[3] *Theological Magazine*, 1802, p. 39.
[4] *Methodist Magazine*, 1803, p. 215.

1768 Age 65 out for Weardale, Teesdale, and Swaledale, where he spent the next four days. At Richmond, he preached in the market place, the Yorkshire militia forming a considerable part of his congregation,—"a rude rabble rout, without sense, decency, or good manners." At Barnardcastle, the Durham militia was a perfect contrast, officers and soldiers all behaving well. Wesley's visit to the "dales" circuit was a pleasant one. He writes: "I have not found so deep and lively a work in any other part of the kingdom as runs through the whole circuit, particularly in the vales that wind between these horrid mountains."

Returning to Newcastle, Wesley visited South Shields, and preached to more than could hear him. Here the poor Methodists were often beaten, rolled in the mud and in the snow, and sometimes narrowly escaped with life: but, continuing faithful, God honoured them; a cockpit was turned into a Methodist chapel,[1] and Methodism was firmly anchored.

On the 13th of June, Wesley left Newcastle for the south, and spent the next six weeks in visiting his societies in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire.

The Rev. Thomas Adam, rector of Wintringham, one of the evangelical clergymen of the period, has been already mentioned. Like some others, this unquestionably pious man had become a determined opponent of the Methodists, and hence the following letter, addressed to him by Wesley.

"SWINFLEET, *July* 19, 1768.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—One of Wintringham informed me yesterday, that you said no sensible and well meaning man could hear, and much less join, the Methodists; because they all *acted under a lie*, professing themselves members of the Church of England, while they licensed themselves as Dissenters. You are a little misinformed. The greater part of the Methodist preachers are not licensed at all; and several of them that are, are not licensed as Dissenters.

"We are, in truth, so far from being enemies to the Church, rather bigots to it. I dare not, like Mr. Venn, leave the parish church where I am, to go to an Independent meeting. I dare not advise others to go thither, rather than to church. I advise all, over whom I have any influence, steadily to keep to the Church. Meantime, I advise them to see, that the kingdom of God is within them; that their hearts be full of love to God and man; and to look upon all, of whatever opinion, who are

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1813, p. 441.

like minded, as their 'brother, and sister, and mother.' O sir! what art of men or devils is this, which makes you so studiously stand aloof from those who are thus minded? I cannot but say to you, as I did to Mr. Walker, 'The Methodists do not want you; but you want them.' You want the life, the spirit, the power, which they have; not of themselves, but by the free grace of God; else how could it be, that so good a man, and so good a preacher, should have so little fruit of his labour, his unwearied labour, for so many years? Have your parishioners the life of religion in their souls? Have they so much as the form of it? Are the people of Wintringham, in general, any better than those of Winterton, or Horton? Alas! sir, what is it that hinders your reaping the fruit of so much pains and so many prayers? 1768 Age 65

"Is it not possible this may be the very thing, your setting yourself against those whom God owns, by the continual conviction and conversion of sinners? I fear, as long as you in anywise oppose these, your rod will not blossom, neither will you see the desire of your soul, in the prosperity of the souls committed to your charge.

"I am, dear sir, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

In his journey southwards, Wesley visited, for the second time, his friend Fletcher, at Madeley,—a man, in many respects, the opposite of Mr. Adam of Wintringham, and especially in his feelings towards the Methodists. So far from shunning them, or being ashamed of them, he, as far as possible, identified himself with them; and, at the very last conference before he died, entreated Wesley to make Madeley a circuit town, and to put John Fletcher down as a supernumerary preacher there. He made his kitchen a Methodist chapel, in which Wesley's itinerants and his own curate regularly preached; while his study was the place in which were penned the ablest defences of Wesley's doctrines that were ever committed to the public press.

From Madeley, Wesley went to Shrewsbury, where, as early as 1744, there was a poor woman, who had been converted in London under the preaching of the Methodists, and who now obtained a living, by mending her neighbours' stockings. While thus employed, at their respective houses, she would relate to them her religious experience, read to them a sermon, and then engage in prayer. By this means, she had already formed a society of sixteen or eighteen persons; and the Rev. Job Orton, the well known author, a native

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. iii., p. 320.

1768 Age 65 of Shrewsbury, and at this time its presbyterian minister, declared that this poor stocking-mending Methodist was not only of "an excellent and serious spirit," but had had more success in converting sinners than he had had by all his preaching.[1]

Leaving Shrewsbury, Wesley rode right through Wales to Pembroke, where he "read prayers, preached, and administered the sacrament to a serious congregation at St. Daniels;" and so tried to remove some misunderstandings among the Methodists, that he "left the people full of good desires, and in tolerable good humour with each other." Here Methodism had been begun seven years before, when Thomas Taylor traversed mountains, forded rivers, and plunged through bogs, with an empty purse and an empty stomach, seeking to save sinners with a zeal and a spirit of self denial worthy of the noblest missionary that ever lived.[2]

At Neath, where the minister of the parish was just dead, the churchwardens announced, that Wesley would preach in the parish church. He did so, but says: "I was greatly disgusted at the manner of singing. 1. Twelve or fourteen persons kept it to themselves, and quite shut out the congregation. 2. These repeated the same words, contrary to all sense and reason, six, or eight, or ten times over. 3. According to the shocking custom of modern music, different persons sung different words at one and the same moment; an intolerable insult on common sense, and utterly incompatible with any devotion."

After more than five months of laborious travelling, Wesley came to Bristol on Saturday the 13th of August, between eleven and twelve o'clock at night. His conference had to open two days afterwards; but the first news he heard was, that his wife was dangerously ill in London. He had about forty-eight hours before he must meet his preachers, twenty-four of which were sabbatical. The distance to London and back again was two hundred and twenty-eight miles; the roads not the best; and the mode of travelling a perfect contrast to what exists at present. Wesley was an aged man, of more than sixty-five; for nearly six months he had been travelling

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1815, p. 459. [2] Taylor's "Redeeming Grace."

and preaching incessantly, and might now fairly wish for a few hours' rest. But no sooner did he hear of his wife's affliction, than, notwithstanding her unloving heart and life, he started off to London, which, by travelling most of the sabbath day, he reached at one o'clock on Monday morning; when, finding that the fever was abated and the danger gone, he set out again within an hour, and, by hard driving, arrived in Bristol on Monday afternoon. Next morning he opened his annual conference, and closed it the following Friday, exclaiming, "Oh! what can we do for more labourers? We can only cry to the Lord of the harvest." 1768 Age 6

One of the chief points discussed at the present conference was, whether the itinerant preachers should be allowed to engage in trade. This was a question at once delicate and difficult. In the first place, many of them had wives and children, the provision for whose maintenance was of the most slender kind. Secondly, the men were not ordained, and had no clerical status whatever. So far there seemed to be no difficulty. But, in the third place, though not ordained, the preachers were regarded by Wesley as occupying, to all practical intents and purposes, the same position as the regular ministers of the Church of England; and, hence, he considered it as unseemly and as improper for his itinerants to be engaged in trade as it would be for the clergy of the Established Church. "God," says he, "has called us to supply their lack of service to the sheep that are without shepherds, and to spend and be spent therein. Every travelling preacher solemnly professes to have nothing else to do; and receives his little allowance for this very end, that he may not need to do anything else,—that he may not be entangled in the things of this life, but may give himself wholly to these things."

The result was, the few preachers who had resorted to some kind of trade, for the purpose of eking out the insufficient maintenance for their families were *advised* to give up their business as soon as possible, and especially *hawking drops* (which their wives might sell at home), for it had "a bad appearance, and did not suit the dignity of their calling."

The increase of members during the year was 430. Wesley was not satisfied with this. Hence the question:

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"In many places the work of God seems to stand still. What can be done to revive and enlarge it?"

"Answer—1. Much good has been done by the books which have been published; and more would be, if they were spread more effectually.

"2. Let there be more field preaching; without this, the work of God will hardly increase in any place.

"3. Let the preaching at five in the morning be constantly kept up, wherever you can have twenty hearers. This is the glory of the Methodists! Whenever this is dropped, they will dwindle away into nothing. Rising early is equally good for soul and body. It helps the nerves better than a thousand medicines; and, in particular, preserves the sight, and prevents lowness of spirits, more than can be well imagined.

"4. As soon as there are four men or women believers in any place, put them into a *band*. In every place where there are bands, meet them constantly, and encourage them to speak without reserve.

"5. Be conscientiously exact in the whole Methodist discipline. One part of our discipline has been generally neglected, namely, the changing of the stewards. This has been attended with many ill consequences; many stewards have been ready to ride over the preacher's head. Let every assistant, at the next quarterly meeting, change one steward at least, in every society, if there be therein any other man that can keep an account.

"6. Beware of *formality* in singing, or it will creep in upon us unawares. Is it not creeping in already, by those complex tunes which it is scarce possible to sing with devotion? Such is, 'Praise the Lord, ye blessed ones!' Such the long quavering Hallelujah, annexed to the Morning Song tune, which I defy any man living to sing devoutly. The repeating the same word so often, especially while another repeats different words, shocks all common sense, brings in dead formality, and has no more of religion in it than a Lancashire hornpipe. Do not suffer the people to sing too slow. This naturally tends to formality, and is brought in by those who have very strong or very weak voices. Why should not the assistant see, that they be taught to sing in every large society?

"7. Let a quarterly fast be observed in all our societies.

"8. Which of us 'fasts every Friday in the year'? Which of us fasts at all? Does not this show the present temper of our minds soft and unnerved? How then can we advance the work of God, though we may preach *loud* and *long* enough? Here is the root of the evil. Hence, the work of God droops; few are convinced, few justified, few of our brethren sanctified! Hence, more and more doubt if we are to be sanctified at all till death. That we may all speak the same thing, I ask once for all, 'Shall we defend this perfection or give it up'? You all agree to defend it, meaning thereby, as we did from the beginning, salvation from all sin, by the love of God and our neighbour filling our heart. You are all agreed, we may be saved from all sin *before death*. The substance then is settled. But as to the circumstance, is the change instantaneous or gradual? It is both one and the other. But should we in preaching

insist upon both one and the other? Certainly. But how far from entire sanctification are we still! The religion of the Methodists, in general, is not internal: at least, not deep, universal, uniform; but superficial, partial, uneven. And what pains do we take to make it otherwise? Do we visit from house to house, according to the plan laid down in the minutes? Only spend half the time in *this visiting*, which you spend in talking uselessly, and you will have time enough. Do this, particularly in confirming and building up believers. Then, and not till then, the work of the Lord will prosper in your hands. Unless, also, we can take care of the *rising generation*, the present revival of religion will be *res unius ætatis*, it will last only the age of a man. Spend an hour a week with the children, in every large town, whether you like it or not. Talk with them every time you see any at home. Pray in earnest for them. Diligently instruct and vehemently exhort all parents at their own houses. Read carefully the life of Mr. Brainerd. Let us be followers of him, as he was of Christ; in absolute self devotion, in total deadness to the world, and in fervent love to God and man. We want nothing but this. Then the world and the devil must fall under our feet. Lastly, let us keep to the Church. They that leave the Church leave the Methodists. The clergy cannot separate us from our brethren; the Dissenting ministers can and do. Therefore, carefully avoid whatever has a tendency to separate men from the Church. In particular, preaching at any hour which hinders them from going to it. Let every assistant look to this. Let all the servants in our preaching houses go to church on Sunday morning at least. Let every preacher likewise go always on Sunday morning, and, when he can, in the afternoon. God will bless those who go on week days too, as often as they have opportunity."

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Wesley's means, then, to promote a revival of the work of God, were a diffusion of Methodist literature, field and morning preaching, the enforcement of Methodist discipline, good singing, quarterly fasts, the preaching of the doctrine of Christian perfection, house to house visitation, attention to the young, continued union with the Established Church, and, above all and more than all, more inward and outward religion among the preachers.

Before leaving the conference of 1768, we insert a letter, which, so far as we are aware, has not before been published, except in the "Methodist Pocket Book" for 1799. It was addressed to James Morgan, one of Wesley's itinerant preachers, well read, and popular, but who had sunk into a state of nervousness, and had settled down in the city of Dublin.

"ST. JUST, NEAR THE LAND'S END, *September* 3, 1768.

"DEAR JEMMY,—I have been thinking much of *you*; and why should I not tell you all I think, and all I fear, concerning you?

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"I think all that you said at the conference upon the subject of the late debates was right. And it amounted to no more than this: 'the general rule is, they who are in the favour of God know they are so. But there may be some exceptions. Some may fear and love God, and yet not be clearly conscious of His favour; at least, they may not dare to affirm that their sins are forgiven.' If you put the case thus, I think no man in his senses will be tempted to contradict you; for none can doubt, but whoever loves God is in the favour of God. But is not this a little misstating the case? I do not conceive the question turned here; but you said, or was imagined to say, 'all penitents are in God's favour'; or, 'all who mourn after God are in the favour of God.' And this was what many disliked; because they thought it was unscriptural and unsafe, as well as contrary to what *we* had always taught. That this *is* contrary to what *we* had always taught, is certain; as all our hymns, as well as other writings, testify: so that (whether it be true or not), it is, without any question, a *new* doctrine among the Methodists. We have always taught, that a *penitent mourned*, or was pained, on this very account, because he felt he was 'not in the favour of God, but had the wrath of God abiding on him. Hence we supposed the language of his heart to be, 'Lost and undone for aid I cry'; and we believed he was really 'lost and undone,' till God did

'Peace, righteousness, and joy impart,
And speak Himself into his heart.'

"And I still apprehend this to be the scriptural doctrine, confirmed, not by a few detached texts, but by the whole tenor of Scripture, and, more particularly, of the Epistle to the Romans. But if so, the contrary to it must be unsafe, for that general reason, because it is unscriptural; to which one may add the particular reason, that it naturally tends to lull mourners to sleep; to make them say, 'Peace, peace' to their souls, when there is no peace.

"But it may be asked, 'Will not this discourage mourners?' Yes, it will discourage them from stopping where they are; it will discourage them from resting, before they have the witness in themselves, before Christ is revealed in them. But it will *encourage* them to seek in the gospel way; to ask till they receive pardon and peace. And we are to encourage them, not by telling them they are in the favour of God, though they do not know it; (such a word as this we would never utter in a congregation, at the peril of our souls;) but by assuring them, 'Every one that seeketh findeth, every one that asketh receiveth.'

"I am afraid you have not been sufficiently wary in this; but have given occasion to them that sought occasion. But this is not all. I doubt you did not 'see God's hand in Shimei's tongue.' 'Unto you it *was given* to suffer' a little of what you extremely wanted,—obloquy and evil report. But you did not acknowledge either the gift or the Giver. You saw only T. Olivers, not God. O Jemmy, you do not know yourself. You cannot bear to be continually steeped in the esteem and praise of men. Therefore, I tremble at your stay at Dublin; it is the most dangerous place for

you under heaven! All I can say is, God *can* preserve you in the fiery furnace, and I hope He will. 1768 Age 65

"I am, dear Jemmy, yours affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."

A letter has been already inserted in which Wesley congratulates his brother on the reports he had received respecting the success of his ministry in London. This was somewhat premature, for, in reality, instead of there being an increase in the London circuit, there was a decrease of seventy members; and there was a serious intention to abandon the chapel in Spitalfields. Hence the following letter "to the stewards of the Foundery."

"PEMBROKE, *August* 6, 1768.

"MY DEAR BRETHREN,—The thing you mention is of no small concern, and ought not to be determined hastily. Indeed, it would be easy to answer, if we considered only how to save money; but we are to consider also how to save souls. Now, I doubt whether we should act wisely in this respect were we to give up the chapel in Spitalfields. We have no other preaching place in or near that populous quarter of the town; and a quarter which, upon one account, I prefer before almost any other; namely, that the people in general are more simple, and less confused by any other preachers. I think, therefore, it would not be well to give up this, if we could gain a thousand pounds thereby. I should look upon it as selling the souls of men for money; which God will give us in due time without this. That many who live near the Foundery would be glad of it I allow, because it would save them trouble. But neither can I put the saving of trouble in competition with the saving of souls.

"I am, my dear brethren, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Poor Spitalfields! Noble Wesley! Let the fashionable Methodists of the present generation ponder such sentiments as these, and hesitate before they abandon their old chapels, because surrounded by none but the abject and the poor, and because keeping them open involves expense and trouble.

It is a remarkable fact, that almost in the very year in which Methodism was founded in America, it was instituted in Newfoundland. For nine years, Laurence Coughlan was one of Wesley's itinerants. In 1764, he was ordained by Erasmus, the Greek bishop, and was put away from the Methodist connexion. In 1766,[2] he was reordained by the

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 359.

[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1785, p. 491.

1768 Age 65 Bishop of London, and was sent to Newfoundland by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. It is true, he went as a clergyman of the Church of England, but he took his Methodism with him, and established classes, in which the present Methodism of Newfoundland had its origin. In a letter to Wesley, he writes:

"I am, and do confess myself, a Methodist. The name I love, and hope I ever shall. The plan which you first taught me, as to doctrine and discipline, I have followed. We have the sacrament once a month, and have about two hundred communicants. This is more than all the other missionaries in the land have: nor do I know of any who attend our sacrament, who have not the fear of God; and some are happy in His love. There are some also whose mouths the Lord hath opened to give a word of exhortation; and I hope He will raise up many more."

It would be a pleasant task to trace the steps of Mr. Coughlan in Newfoundland; but suffice it to remark that he returned to England, and shortly after, while conversing with Wesley in his study, was seized with paralysis, and suddenly removed to his rest in heaven.[1]

Coughlan was one of those in London, who professed to receive the blessing of Christian perfection; but, like many others, imbibed fantastic notions respecting it. Soon after the conference of 1768, Wesley wrote to him as follows.

"DEAR LAURENCE,—By a various train of providences you have been led to the very place where God intended you should be; and you have reason to praise Him, that He has not suffered your labour there to be in vain. In a short time, how little will it signify, whether we had lived in the Summer Islands, or beneath

'The rage of Arctos and eternal frost!'

"How soon will this dream of life be at an end! And when we are once landed in eternity, it will be all one, whether we spent our time on earth in a palace, or had not where to lay our head.

"You never learned, either from my conversation, or preaching, or writings, that 'holiness consisted in a glow of joy.' I constantly told you quite the contrary: I told you it was the love of God and our neighbour; the image of God stamped on the heart; the life of God in the soul of man; the mind that was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ also walked. If Mr. Maxfield, or you, took it to be anything else, it was your own fault, not mine; and, whenever you waked out of that dream, you ought not to have laid the blame of it upon me. Perhaps you thought

[1] Atmore's "Memorial"; and *Methodist Magazine*, 1851, p. 869.

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you had received what you had not. But pray do not measure all men by yourself; do not imagine you are the universal standard. If you deceived yourself, you should not infer that all others do. Many think they are justified, and are not; but we cannot infer, that none are justified. So neither, if many think they are 'perfected in love,' and are not, will it follow that none are so. Blessed be God, though we set a hundred enthusiasts aside, we are still 'encompassed with a cloud of witnesses,' who have testified, and do testify, in life and in death, that perfection which I have taught these forty years! This perfection cannot be a delusion, unless the Bible be a delusion too; I mean, loving God with all our hearts, and our neighbour as ourselves. I pin down all its opposers to this definition of it. No evasion! No shifting the question! Where is the delusion of this? Either you received this love, or you did not. If you did, dare you call it a delusion? If you received anything else, it does not at all affect the question. O Laurence, if sister Coughlan and you ever did enjoy this, humble yourselves before God for casting it away; if you did not, God grant you may!

"Yours, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Wesley had been incessantly travelling for nearly the last six months; but no sooner were the sessions of the Bristol conference ended, than he started off to Cornwall, where he spent the interval between August 26 and September 18. On his way, he preached to a serious congregation at Taunton, and asks, "Shall we have fruit here also?" Wesley might well ask this. For many a long year, he had been accustomed to preach at Taunton, and had been received either with stupid indifference or active contempt. As early as 1744, he attempted to preach in the yard of the Three Cups inn; but had no sooner named his text, than the mayor came, in all his full blown dignity, and ordered the proclamation to be read, and silenced the preacher.[2] Almost a quarter of a century had elapsed since then; and now there was a small society, of which one of the members was Thomas Dingle, who for sixty-three years was a chief supporter of the Taunton society, and one of its brightest ornaments.

Wesley's labours in Cornwall were Herculean. Though now in the sixty-sixth year of his age, for eight days together he preached, "mostly in the open air, three or four times a day," and says, "I hardly felt any weariness, first or last."

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. iii., p. 324. [2] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1744, p. 51.

1768 Age 65 He was also not without adventures. At Polperro, his bedroom was filled with pilchards and conger eels, which made him glad to accept the offer of another. At Plymouth, on his return, a "silly man talked without ceasing" during the sermon, till Wesley desired the people "to open to the right and left, and let him look his garrulous disturber fairly in the face," upon which the noisy prater "pulled off his hat, and quietly went away." Between Charlton and Lympsham, the rivers were so swollen, that Wesley's horse had to swim, and Wesley himself had to be taken to his lodgings on an "honest man's shoulders."

Reaching Bristol on September 24, Wesley spent the next few days in visiting the neighbouring towns and villages. At Frome, he found the liveliest society that there was in the Wiltshire circuit: a fact which greatly surprised him, because the town was made up of a strange medley "of men of all opinions,—anabaptists, quakers, presbyterians, Arians, antinomians, Moravians, and what not." He adds: "if any hold to the truth, in the midst of all these, surely the power must be of God."

The Frome Methodists, however, were not untrained recruits, but veteran soldiers, who had stood the brunt of many a furious and fiery fight. Twenty-two years before this, Methodism had been started in their town, by a poor Bristol pedlar, who dealt in rags and small ware, singing to the people Wesley's hymns. Since then, a vagabond barber—a tool in the hands of the parish priest—had dragged two Methodist women to prison. Mrs. Seagram had been fined £20 for permitting her house to be used as a preaching place; and, not being able to pay the fine, had had all her stock in trade and her household goods sold by public auction, while she and her two fatherless children were turned penniless out of doors. In one instance, the mob rushed into the preaching room, seized the benches, and made a bonfire of them. Methodism in Frome had outlived all this; and, despite the sectarianism of the town, it was destined still to live and prosper.

On October 24, Wesley set out for London, and employed the first week in November in a preaching tour through the three counties of Hertford, Bedford, and Northampton. At Hertford, a chapel had been built by Mr. Andrews, who after-

wards, in 1777, gave to Wesley's new chapel in City Road the pulpit which has been used in Methodism's cathedral from that time to this.[1] 1768 Age 65

The second week in November was spent in a similar visitation of the societies in Oxfordshire. He writes: "I was desired to preach at Oxford. The room was throughly filled, and not with curious, but deeply serious hearers. Many of these desired, that our travelling preachers would take them in their turn; with which I willingly complied." Oxford had been Methodism's cradle, but the infant had long been absent. Henceforth, Methodism was one of Oxford's institutions; though, for long, long years, it was a thing of feebleness and of small dimensions. The "Oxfordshire" circuit extended over the greater part of Berkshire, Wiltshire, and Buckinghamshire; and, even as late as 1787, there were throughout the circuit only four Methodist chapels, namely, at Oxford, Wycombe, Wallingford, and Witney. At Aylesbury, the Methodists preached in the baptists' chapel; at Newbury, in an ironfounder's shop; and at all the other places, in private houses. The small chapel in Oxford was in New-Inn-Hall Lane;[2] and the Oxford home of the two unmarried preachers, Joseph Entwisle and Richard Reece, was a garret in the house of a journeyman shoemaker, for which the society paid sixpence a week as rent; and which had to serve them as dining room, sitting room, bedroom, and study,[3] all in one.

The third week in November was occupied in meeting the London classes; and the fourth in a tour in Kent. The rest of the year was chiefly spent in town.

Wesley was fervent, but not fanatical; he loved earnestness in religious worship, but not disorder. Hence the following letter to Mr. Merryweather, of Yarm.

"LEWISHAM, *December* 10, 1768.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—The matter is short: all things in Divine worship must 'be done decently and in order.' Two must never pray at the same time, nor one interrupt another. Either Alice Brammah must take advice, or the society must be warned to keep away from her. These are the very things which were the beginning of poor George Bell's fall.

"I am, your affectionate brother, JOHN WESLEY."[4]

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1825, p. 454.
[2] *Wesleyan Times*, June 19, 1849. [3] Entwisle's Memoir, p. 31.
[4] *Methodist Magazine*, 1826, p. 464.

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We have already seen that, by an enormous effort, in the month of August, Wesley hurried from Bristol to London to visit his afflicted wife. On his return he wrote her as follows.

"MY LOVE,—I can make allowance for faintness, and weakness, and pain. I remember when it was my own case, at this very place, and when you spared no pains in nursing and waiting upon me, till it pleased God to make you the chief instrument in restoring my strength. I am glad you have the advice of a skilful physician; but you must not be surprised or discouraged if you do not recover your strength so soon as one might wish, especially at this time of the year. What is chiefly to be desired is, that God may sanctify all His dispensations to you, and that all may be the means of your being more entirely devoted to Him, whose favour is better than strength, or health, or life itself.

"I am, dear Molly, your ever affectionate husband,

"JOHN WESLEY."

No sooner was Wesley's wife convalescent, than, instead of waiting to welcome him to his home in London, she, in one of her insane piques, took her departure to Newcastle. The following letter to his brother refers to this, and also to his preparing an edition of Young's "Night Thoughts," and to other matters.

"LONDON, *December* 17, 1768.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I thank you for your reproof. There is reason in what you say. If there was not evil, there was the appearance of evil.

"Matters have not been well carried on at Liverpool; but 'what cannot be cured must be endured.'

"Why, you simpleton, you are cutting me out a month's work. Nay, but I have no leisure nor inclination to write a book. I intend only: (1) to leave out what I most dislike; (2) to mark what I most approve of; (3) to prefix a short preface. And I shall run the hazard of printing it at Bristol. There you yourself can read the proof sheets.

"You do well with regard to my sister Emily. What farther is wanting I will supply. I hear nothing from our friend at Newcastle. I am now a mere fellow of a college again. Adieu!

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Wesley was still troubled on account of the chapel debts. Nearly £6000 had been contributed; but there was still a debt of £7728 upon the chapels in the United Kingdom undefrayed.[2] This gave rise to the following letter.

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 127.

[2] Minutes of Conference.

"LONDON, *December*, 1768. 1768
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"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Last year, Mr. H —— was much persuaded that, by means of the yearly subscription, our whole debt of above £11,000 would be paid within two years. Many of our brethren were more sanguine still. They were persuaded that, by generously exerting themselves, and giving a large sum at once, it would be paid in one year. I did not expect this; but I would not contradict, because I would not discourage them. The event was as I foresaw. By the noble effort which many of our brethren made, most of the pressing debts are already discharged, amounting in the whole to near £7000. But a debt of about £7000 remains upon us still. What can be done with regard to this? I will tell you what occurs to my mind. Many of our brethren chose to subscribe yearly ten, five, three, two guineas, or less. I doubt not but these will cheerfully pay the residue of their subscription, and perhaps some of them will add a little thereto, as they see the great occasion there is for it. A few delayed subscribing, because they wanted to see the event; supposing the design to be impracticable, and that 'nothing good would come out of it.' As it now appears that great good has come out of it, that many burdens are already removed, I cannot but earnestly exhort all these now to set their shoulders to the work. Now, at least, let them exert themselves, for my sake, for the gospel's sake, and for the sake of their still afflicted brethren, who groan under a load which they cannot well bear, and yet cannot remove without our assistance. Several generously contributed at once, in hope of paying the whole debt. Of them nothing more can be required, but their prayers that others may be as openhearted as themselves. Nevertheless, if of their own free goodwill they see good to add a little to their former benefactions—this, as well as the former, is lent unto the Lord, and what they lay out shall be paid them again. Ought I not to add, that there were some of our brethren who did not answer my expectation? I knew they were able to assist largely; and I flattered myself they were not less willing than able, as they owed me their own souls also, and this was the first favour of the kind which I had requested of them. Let me be excused from saying any more of what is past. Let them now drop all excuses and objections, and show they love me and their brethren, and the work of God, not in word only, but in deed and in truth. Let me have joy over you, my brethren, in particular. You have a measure of this world's goods, and you see your brother hath need. I have need of your help, inasmuch as the burdens of my brethren are my own. Do not pass by on the other side; but come and help as God has enabled you. Do all you can to lighten the labour, and strengthen the hands, of your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Wesley was a great reader, as well as a great writer; and, during the year 1768, his journal is enriched with an unusual

[1] A manuscript circular, signed by Wesley himself.

1768 number of his critical remarks. A few may be given as
Age 65 specimens of others.

"January 11.—This week I spent my scraps of time in reading Mr. Wodrow's 'History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland.' It would transcend belief, but that the vouchers are too authentic to admit of any exception. O what a blessed governor was that goodnatured man, so called, King Charles the Second! Bloody Queen Mary was a lamb, a mere dove, in comparison of him!"

"April 29.—I read over an extremely sensible book, but one that surprised me much: 'An Inquiry into the Proofs of the Charges commonly advanced against Mary Queen of Scotland.' By means of original papers, the author has made it clear: (1) That she was altogether innocent of the murder of Lord Darnley, and no way privy to it. (2) That she married Lord Bothwell (then near seventy years old, herself but four-and-twenty), from the pressing instance of the nobility in a body, who, at the same time, assured her he was innocent of the king's murder. (3) That Murray, Morton, and Lethington, themselves contrived that murder, in order to charge it upon her; as well as forged those vile letters and sonnets which they palmed upon the world for hers. 'But how then can we account for the quite contrary story, which has been almost universally received?' Most easily. It was penned and published in French, English, and Latin, (by Queen Elizabeth's order,) by George Buchanan, who was secretary to Lord Murray and in Queen Elizabeth's pay; so he was sure to throw dirt enough. Nor was she at liberty to answer for herself. 'But what then was Queen Elizabeth?' As just and merciful as Nero, and as good a Christian as Mahomet."

"May 20.—I went on reading that fine book, Bishop Butler's 'Analogy.' But I doubt it is too hard for most of those for whom it is chiefly intended. Freethinkers, so called, are seldom close thinkers. They will not be at the pains of reading such a book as this. One that would profit them must dilute his sense, or they will neither swallow nor digest it."

"November 19.—I read Dr. Nowell's answer to Mr. Hill, concerning the expulsion of the students at Oxford. He has said all that could be said for that stretch of power; and he says quite enough, to clear the Church of England from the charge of predestination; a doctrine which he proves to be utterly inconsistent with the Common Prayer, the Communion Service, the Office of Baptism, the articles, the homilies, and the other writings of those that compiled them."

The last extract refers to a matter too nearly allied to Methodism to be passed without further notice.

"On the 12th of March, 1768, six students belonging to Edmund hall, Oxford, were expelled the university, for holding Methodistical tenets, and taking upon them to pray, read or expound the Scriptures, and sing hymns in private houses. The principal of the hall, Dr. Dixon, defended

their doctrines from the thirty-nine articles of the Established Church, and spoke in the highest terms of their piety and the exemplariness of their lives; but sentence was pronounced against them. Dr. Nowell, one of the heads of houses present, observed, that as these six gentlemen were expelled for having too much religion, it would be very proper to inquire into the conduct of some who had too little."[1] 1768 Age 6

The expelled students were Benjamin Kay, Thomas Jones, Thomas Grove, Erasmus Middleton, Joseph Shipman, and James Mathews. The junta of expellers were Drs. Durell, Randolph, Fothergill, Nowell, and Atterbury.[2] The charges brought against the young culprits were: 1. That they had held or frequented illicit conventicles, where some of them, though not in orders, had preached and prayed extempore, particularly in the house of a staymaker, a woman who herself officiated and taught. 2. That some of them had been bred up to the lowest trades and occupations, for one had been a weaver and kept a taphouse, a second had been a barber, a third a draper; and further all were wholly illiterate, and incapable of performing the statutable exercises of the university; and were maintained at the charge of persons suspected of enthusiasm. 3. That they were attached to the sect called Methodists, and held their doctrines, namely, "that faith without works is sufficient for salvation; that there is no necessity for good works; that the immediate impulse of the Spirit is to be waited for; that once a child of God always a child of God; and the like." 4. That one of them, before his entrance into the university, had preached, and, in defiance of his father's authority, had connected himself with the Methodists. 5. That some of them had behaved very irreverently and disrespectfully to their tutor, and had industriously sought to cavil with and to vex him.[3]

It is right to add, that none of these young men had been connected with Wesley. Mr. Jones, the barber, had, for some time resided, with the Rev. John Newton, and, under his instruction, had made considerable progress in the Greek and Hebrew languages. Mr. Kay was of a respectable family, and an excellent scholar, and had an exhibition paid by the Iron-

[1] *London Magazine*, 1768, p. 125.
[2] Philip's Life of Whitefield, p. 492.
[3] *London Magazine*, 1768, p. 214.

1768 Age 65 mongers' Company. Mr. Mathews had been instructed by Fletcher of Madeley. Mr. Middleton had been under the tutelage of the Rev. Thomas Haweis. Of Mr. Grove and Mr. Shipman we know nothing, except that the latter, after his expulsion, was admitted to the college of the Countess of Huntingdon, at Trevecca.

This act of Oxford tyranny, as might be expected, created great commotion; and numbers of tracts and pamphlets, *pro* and *con*, were published. Among others, Whitefield rushed into the battle, in a "Letter to the Rev. Dr. Durell," 8vo, 50 pages, and defended the expelled with great vigour and effect; as also did Dr. Horne, afterwards bishop of Norwich. Macgowan published his "Shaver," in which he shaved the collegiate rulers with no gentle hand, and, in the process, must have made them smart. Sir Richard Hill, a young man of thirty-six, who for some time past had been using his utmost endeavours to improve Oxford morality, issued his "Pietas Oxoniensis," 8vo, 85 pages, in which he belaboured the junta with unsparing severity. Several replies were written in justification of the Oxford bull; and, after an immense expenditure of time, and not a little display of angry temper, this execrable act of the Oxford authorities was allowed to repose in silence. It is a fact, however, far too serious to be forgotten, that while Oxford university, in past days, has tolerated in its students the most notorious wickedness, and while, at the present day, it tolerates German scepticism and Romish heresy, it once, in one of its paroxysms of pious zeal, ignominiously expelled six young men, whose only crimes were, that some of them had been ignobly bred, and all had sung, and prayed, and read the Scriptures in private houses.

The Countess of Huntingdon was accused of maintaining some or all of these young students at the Oxford university; and perhaps there was a modicum of truth in this. Be that as it may, she soon made her young preachers independent of Oxford help. Trevecca House, in the parish of Talgarth, in Wales, was an ancient structure, supposed to have been erected about the year 1176. This building the countess opened as a college, five months after the expulsions just mentioned,—on the 24th of August, 1768, the anniversary of her ladyship's birthday. Whitefield preached at the opening;

Fletcher was made the president; and, for a few months, Mr. Easterbrook the head master; when Joseph Benson was appointed his successor. Of course, Fletcher was not expected to relinquish his charge at Madeley; but he was to attend the college at Trevecca as often as he conveniently could; to give advice, with regard to the appointment of masters, and the admission or exclusion of students; to oversee their studies and conduct; to assist their piety; and to judge of their qualifications for the ministry.[1] As is well known, both Fletcher and Benson soon retired, because of the doctrinal differences that sprang up; but Trevecca was still used as a seminary for the training of Calvinistic ministers, till 1792, when the institution was removed to Cheshunt, in Hertfordshire. Wesley from the beginning was in doubt of it, though, perhaps, without reason. In a letter to his brother, dated "May 19, 1768," he writes: "I am glad Mr. Fletcher has been with you. But if the tutor fails, what will become of our college at Trevecca? Did you ever see anything more queer than their plan of institution? Pray who penned it, man or woman? I am afraid the visitor too will fail."[2] Was there a tinge of jealousy in this? We know not. Troubles, it is true, soon sprung up; but the countess made Trevecca her principal place of residence; and within its walls were trained a noble band of earnest, laborious, and useful ministers. The old building is now the residence of a Celtic farmer.[3] *O tempora! O mores!* 1768 Age 6

Excepting the hubbub arising out of the Oxford expulsions, there was not much, in 1768, that was antagonistic to the Methodist movement. A small, paltry pamphlet was published, with the title, "Enthusiasm Reprehended. Three Letters to Mr. John Wesley. With Strictures on his Character, the Reception he met with at Perth, and his Conduct on that occasion." A 12mo volume, of 212 pages, was also issued, entitled "Sermons to Asses"; and was dedicated to Whitefield, Wesley, Romaine, and Madan. Besides these, an eighteenpenny poem was published, entitled "The Hypocrite: a comedy;" in which the writer

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 281. [2] Ibid. vol. xii., p. 126.
[3] "Life and Times of Howel Harris," p. 246.

1768 tries to turn Cibber's satire on disloyalty into a castigation
Age 65 of enthusiasm.

Wesley's publications also were fewer than usual, and hardly any of them original. The following belong to this period.

1. "A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Rutherforth." This has been already noticed in a previous chapter.

2. "A Caution to False Prophets: a Sermon on Matthew vii. 15–20. Particularly recommended to the people called Methodists." 12mo, 12 pages. In this sermon, Wesley discusses a point which he confesses had puzzled him for many years, namely, whether it is right to hear a minister who is either immoral, or who preaches false doctrine. He still hesitates to pronounce an opinion, and recommends those who were in doubt to "wait upon God in prayer, and then act according to the best light they had."

3. "Instructions for Members of Religious Societies. Translated from the French." Under the date of February 26, 1768, Wesley writes: "I translated from the French one of the most useful tracts I ever saw, for those who desire to be 'fervent in spirit.' How little does God regard men's opinions! What a multitude of wrong opinions are embraced by all the members of the Church of Rome! Yet how highly favoured have many of them been!"

4. "An Extract from the Rev. Mr. Law's Later Works." Two vols., 12mo, 251 and 204 pages. About a quarter of a century before this, Wesley had published an extract from Law's "Christian Perfection"; an extract from his "Serious Call"; and an extract from his "Serious Answer to Dr. Trapp." He now published similar extracts from Law's answer to "Christianity as old as Creation," his "Spirit of Prayer," his "Spirit of Love," his "Letters," and his "Address to the Clergy."

5. "An Extract of the Life of the late Rev. David Brainerd." 12mo, 274 pages. Just at the time when Methodism was extending its mission to America and Newfoundland, Wesley issued his life of one of the most devoted missionaries that ever lived: a young man who died before he arrived at the age of thirty; but whose piety, for depth and fervour, has seldom been excelled; and whose four years' mission among

the Delaware and other Indians, from 1743 to 1747, would warm the heart and improve the character of all candidates for missionary work. 1768 Age 6

Besides the above, another publication belongs to the year 1768,—"Free Thoughts on the Present State of Public Affairs," 12mo, 47 pages. This, strictly speaking, was Wesley's first political pamphlet. At the general election of 1768, John Wilkes, at the time an outlaw, was returned to parliament by the county of Middlesex; and, shortly after, was arrested and committed to the King's Bench prison. For nearly a fortnight, crowds collected outside the prison walls, and soldiers were sent to protect the place. A riot followed; the soldiers fired; six of the rioters were killed, and fourteen badly wounded; and the exploit got the name of the "Massacre of St. George's Fields." For months, Wilkes's business occupied the attention of court and cabinet; when the wretched demagogue was sentenced to pay a fine of £1000, to be imprisoned for two-and-twenty months, and afterwards to find security for good behaviour for seven years. While in prison, he was at the zenith of his fame; subscriptions were opened for the payment of his debts; and his likenesses were so multiplied, that portraits of him squinted from the sign-boards of half the public houses in the kingdom.

It was in the midst of such a state of things, that Wesley wrote the pamphlet already mentioned. He admits that, though "cobblers, tinkers, porters, and hackney coachmen" think themselves wise enough "to instruct both the king and his council," he himself is "not so deeply learned. Politics were beyond his province; but he would use the privilege of an Englishman to speak his naked thoughts." "I have," he writes, "no bias, one way or the other. I have no interest depending. I want no man's favour, having no hopes, no fears, from any man." He then proceeds to defend the character of the king; and maintains that, as an outlaw, Wilkes was incapacitated to take a seat in the House of Commons. "Encumbered with no religion, and disappointed in his application for place and power, Wilkes had set up for patriot, vehemently inveighed against evil counsellors and grievances, and was paid in French *louis d'or* for his agitative services." Wesley then expresses the opinion that, "supposing things to take their

1768 natural course, they must go from bad to worse; the land
Age 65 will become a field of blood; and many thousands of poor Englishmen will sheathe their swords in each other's bowels, for the diversion of their good neighbours. Then, either a commonwealth will ensue, or else a second Cromwell. One must be; but it cannot be determined which,—King Wilkes, or King Mob."

1769.

1769
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TERRIBLE was the political excitement at the commencement of 1769. It was now, that the first of the celebrated letters of "Junius" appeared in the columns of the *Public Advertiser*. These withering invectives became, to a great extent, the political textbook of the nation. For years past, Ireland also had been turbulent, split into factions, and overrun by hordes of Levellers and Whiteboys, Oakboys and Hearts of Steel, all bound together by secret oaths, and a detestation of paying tithes. The kingdom was full of wicked wits and scoffers; and jokes, repartees, *bonmots*, and sarcasms, none of them distinguished for their loyalty, began to spice a large number of the newspapers, periodicals, and pamphlets of the period. Never was Methodism more greatly needed than now.

Whitefield's work in England was nearly ended. He and Wesley were still united in bonds of ardent friendship. The latter writes: "January 9, 1769—I spent a comfortable and profitable hour with Mr. Whitefield, in calling to mind the former times, and the manner wherein God prepared us for a work which it had not then entered into our hearts to conceive." On the day following, Wesley preached in the house of the Countess of Huntingdon, in Portland Row, and Whitefield administered the sacrament.[1] And seven weeks later, Wesley wrote again: "February 27—I had one more agreeable conversation with my old friend and fellow labourer, George Whitefield. His soul appeared to be vigorous still, but his body was sinking apace; and, unless God interposes with His mighty hand, he must soon finish his labours." For six months more, Whitefield rambled over England, preaching three or four times every week, and exclaiming, as though his youthful zest was unabated, "Field preaching, field preaching for ever."[2] At the beginning of September,

[1] "Life and Times of Countess of Huntingdon," vol. ii., p. 126.
[2] Whitefield's Works, vol. iii., p. 387.

1769 Age 66 he embarked for Georgia, and addressed to Wesley the following farewell letter.

"THE DOWNS, ON BOARD THE *Friendship*, Captain Ball,
September 12, 1769.

"REVEREND AND VERY DEAR SIR,—What hath God wrought *for* us, *in* us, *by* us! I sailed out of these Downs almost thirty-three years ago! Oh the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of Thy love, O God! Surely it passeth knowledge. Help, help, O heavenly Father, to adore what we cannot fully comprehend! I am glad to hear, that you had such a pentecost season at the college; one would hope, that these are earnests of good things to some, and that our Lord will not yet remove His candlestick from among us. Duty is ours. Future things belong to Him, who always did, and always will order all things well.

'Leave to His sovereign sway,
To choose and to command;
So shall we wondering own His way,
How wise, how strong His hand.'

"Mutual Christian love will not permit you, and those in connection with you, to forget a willing pilgrim, going now across the Atlantic for the thirteenth time. At present, I am kept from staggering; being fully persuaded, that the voyage will be for the Redeemer's glory, and the welfare of precious and immortal souls. Oh to be kept from flagging in the latter stages of our road! *Ipse, Deo volente, sequar, etsi non passibus æquis.* Cordial love and respect await your brother, and all that are so kind as to inquire after, and be concerned for,

"Reverend and very dear sir,
"Less than the least of all,
"GEORGE WHITEFIELD."[1]

Thus the old friends parted, not to meet again, till they met in heaven. Twelve months afterwards, the great orator was dead.

Wesley spent the month of January in meeting the London classes, and in a visit to Sheerness and Chatham. In February, he made a tour to Norfolk; and, on the 6th of March, set out for Ireland, and arrived in Dublin on the 22nd. Here we pause, to insert two of his letters to two of his female correspondents. The first was addressed to Lady Maxwell, and refers to a subject of some interest, though one on which opinions will differ.

"LONDON, *March* 3, 1769.

"MY DEAR LADY,—I have heard my mother say, 'I have frequently

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1783, p. 273.

been as fully assured, that my father's spirit was with me, as if I had seen him with my eyes.' But she did not explain herself any further. I have myself many times found, on a sudden, so lively an apprehension of a deceased friend, that I have sometimes turned about to look; at the same time, I have felt an uncommon affection for them. But I never had anything of this kind with regard to any but those that died in faith. In dreams, I have had exceeding lively conversations with them; and I doubt not but they were then very near. 1768 Age 66

"I am, my dear lady, your ever affectionate servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

The next was addressed to Sarah Crosby, the female preacher.

"CHESTER, *March* 18, 1769.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—The westerly winds detain me here. When I am in Ireland, you have only to direct to Dublin, and the letter will find me.

"I advise you, as I did Grace Walton formerly—1. Pray in private or public as much as you can. 2. Even in public, you may properly enough intermix short exhortations with prayer; but keep as far from what is called preaching as you can; therefore, never take a text; never speak in a continued discourse, without some break, above four or five minutes. Tell the people, 'We shall have another prayermeeting at such a time and place.' If Hannah Harrison had followed these few directions, she might have been as useful now as ever.

"As soon as you have time, write more particularly and circumstantially; and let sister Bosanquet do the same. There is now no hindrance in the way; nothing to hinder you speaking as freely as you please to, dear Sally, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Trouble awaited Wesley in Dublin. James Morgan and Thomas Olivers had quarrelled,[3] and the society had suffered loss. Besides this, says Wesley, "I was summoned, by a poor creature who fed my horse three or four times while I was on board. For this service he demanded ten shillings. I gave him half-a-crown. When I informed the court of this, he was sharply reproved. Let all beware of these land sharks on our sea coasts!"

On the 3rd of April, Wesley left Dublin for the provinces. At Armagh, for the first time in his life, he preached in a stable. At Kinnard, he met an old acquaintance, Archdeacon

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 321. [2] Ibid. vol. xii., p. 331.

[3] Taylor's "Redeeming Grace," p. 49; and Wesley's Works, vol. iii., p. 356.

1769 C——e, and, at his request, opened a new church, which had
Age 66 just been built. At Londonderry, he had, what he calls, "a brilliant congregation," but says: "Such a sight gives me no great pleasure; as I have very little hope of doing them good: only 'with God all things are possible.' In no other place in Ireland has more pains been taken by the most able of our preachers. And to how little purpose! Bands they have none: four-and-forty persons in society! The greater part of these heartless and cold. The audience in general dead as stones." At Manorhamilton, "all behaved well," says he, "but one young gentlewoman, who laughed almost incessantly. She knew there was nothing to laugh at; but she thought she laughed prettily." At Cork, the society had been gradually decreasing for seven years, until now the number of members was reduced from 400 to 190. At Portarlington, the society once had a hundred and thirty members; now it had only twenty-four.

Fourteen weeks were spent in traversing all parts of Ireland. In some places, there was declension and great discouragement; in many, Wesley's ministry was accompanied with amazing power; in none, did he meet with brutal persecution. Occasionally a giddy girl would laugh, or an empty headed man would sneer; but the days of sticks and stones were over. Wesley returned to Dublin on the 15th of July; met his Irish preachers in conference; and then, on July 24, embarked for England; having to open his English conference at Leeds on August 1. Before reviewing its proceedings, some further extracts must be given from his correspondence.

The first letter is remarkable. We have scarcely met with another like it. The fastidious may object to some of its expressions; but it must be remembered that, though Wesley always employed plainness of speech, he rarely employed coarseness. Besides, desperate cases require desperate remedies. In this instance, ordinary language, in all likelihood, would have been useless. The Irish Methodists were far from faultless; and Hugh Saunderson, to whom the letter was addressed, and who had just commenced his itinerancy in the Armagh circuit, was far from being a model of perfection. More than once had Wesley to remonstrate with him for his irregularities; and, in 1777, had to expel him. On one occa-

sion, in 1774, Wesley himself was actually arrested on account of Saunderson's peccant conduct. The charge was, that the man had robbed his wife "of £100 in money, and upwards of £30 in goods; and had, beside that, terrified her into madness; so that, through want of her help, and the loss of business," the prosecutor, George Sutherland, "was damaged £500." It was farther alleged, that Saunderson was one of Wesley's preachers, and that the two, to evade Mrs. Saunderson's pursuit, were preparing to fly the country. On such a pretext Wesley was actually arrested, and taken to the Edinburgh Tolbooth, where he had to wait till his friends gave bail for his appearance. This was done; the case was tried; and Mr. Sutherland, the prosecutor, was fined £1000. Of Saunderson's guilt we know nothing; but, three years afterwards, Wesley expelled him from his connexion; and the man first set up at Edinburgh, and then divided the society at Exeter, where he "pitched his standard and declared open war."[1] Such was the culprit to whom Wesley sent the letter following. 1769 Age 6

"*April* 24, 1769.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I shall now tell you the things which have been more or less upon my mind, ever since I have been in the north of Ireland. If you forget them, you will be a sufferer, and so will the people; if you observe them, it will be for the good of both.

"1. To begin with little things. If you regard your health, touch no supper, but a little milk or water gruel. This will entirely, by the blessing of God, secure you from nervous disorders; especially, if you rise early every morning, whether you preach or no.

"2. Be steadily serious. There is no country upon earth where this is more necessary than Ireland; as you generally are encompassed with those who, with a little encouragement, would laugh or trifle from morning to night.

"3. In every town, visit all you can from house to house. I say all you can; for there will be some whom you cannot visit; and if you examine, instruct, reprove, exhort, as need requires, you will have no time hanging on your hands. It is by this means, that the societies are increased wherever T. R. goes; he is preaching from morning to night, warning every one, that he may present every one perfect in Christ Jesus.

"4. But on this, and every other occasion, avoid all familiarity with women. This is a deadly poison, both to *them* and *you*. You cannot be too wary in this respect. Therefore begin from this hour.

"5. The chief matter of your conversation, as well as your preaching,

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. iv., pp. 16, 173, 222.

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should doubtless be the weightier matters of the law. Yet, there are several comparatively little things, which you should earnestly inculcate from time to time; for 'he that despiseth small things shall fall by little and little.' Such are—

"(1) Be active, be diligent; avoid all laziness, sloth, indolence. Fly from every degree, every appearance of it; else you will never be more than half a Christian.

"(2) Be cleanly. In this let the Methodists take pattern by the Quakers. Avoid all nastiness, dirt, slovenliness, both in your person, clothes, house, all about you. Do not stink above ground. This is a bad fruit of laziness. Use all diligence to be clean.

"(3) Whatever clothes you wear let them be whole: no rents, no tatters, no rags. These are a scandal to either man or woman; being another fruit of vile laziness. Mend your clothes, or I shall never expect you to mend your lives. Let none ever see a ragged Methodist.

"(4) Clean yourselves of lice. These are a proof both of uncleanness and laziness. Take pains in this. Do not cut off your hair, but clean it, and keep it clean.

"(5) Cure yourselves and your family of the itch. A spoonful of brimstone will cure you. To let this run from year to year, proves both sloth and uncleanness. Away with it at once. Let not the north be any longer a proverb of reproach to all the nation.

"(6) Use no tobacco unless prescribed by a physician. It is an uncleanly and unwholesome self indulgence; and the more customary it is, the more resolutely should you break off from every degree of that vile custom.

"(7) Use no snuff unless prescribed by a physician. I suppose no other nation in Europe is in such vile bondage to this silly, nasty, dirty custom, as the Irish are; but let the Christians be in this bondage no longer. Assert your liberty, and that all at once; nothing will be done by degrees. But just now you may break loose, through Christ strengthening you.

"(8) Touch no dram. It is liquid fire. It is a sure, though slow poison. It saps the very springs of life. In Ireland, above all countries in the world, I would sacredly abstain from this, because the evil is so general. To this, and snuff, and smoky cabins, I impute the blindness which is so exceeding common throughout the nation.

"I might have inserted under the second article, what I particularly desire, wherever you have preaching, namely, that there may be a little house. Let this be got without delay. Wherever it is not, let none expect to see me.

"I am, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

No apology is needed for the publication of this letter; for Wesley himself published it in his *Arminian Magazine*. Its

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1784, p. 165.

picture of the Irish and of the Irish Methodists is far from being fragrant and pleasant; but it was doubtless true, and shows that Wesley was a great reformer in more respects than one. All the Irish Methodists, however, must not be included in the company above alluded to. The exceptions were not few, but many, and some of them distinguished. One of these was Mrs. Elizabeth Bennis, the first Methodist in Limerick, in 1749, a lady of respectability and intelligence, long the correspondent of Wesley, and who continued one of his devoted followers till her death in 1802.[1] The following letter was addressed to her during Wesley's present visit to the sister island, and refers to an unfounded opinion which Wesley had now renounced. 1769 Age 66

"CORK, *May* 30, 1769.

"DEAR SISTER,—Some years since, I was inclined to think that none, who had once enjoyed and then lost the pure love of God, must ever look to enjoy it again till they were just stepping into eternity. But experience has taught us better things. We have, at present, numerous instances of those who have cast away that unspeakable blessing, and now enjoy it in a larger measure than ever. And should not this be your case? Because you are unworthy? So were they. Because you have been an unfaithful steward? So had they been also; yet, God healed them freely; and so He will you, only do not reason against Him. Forget yourself. Worthy is the Lamb: you shall not die, but live, live all the life of heaven on earth. You need nothing, in order to this, but faith; and who gives this? He that standeth at the door.

"Let there never more be any reserve between you and your truly affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Wesley arrived in Leeds on Saturday, July 29, and on Sunday, the 30th, preached, for the Rev. Henry Crook, in Hunslet church, morning and afternoon. Mr. Crook was an old friend of the two Wesleys. As early as 1756, Charles Wesley preached in his church at Hunslet, and speaks of hundreds of communicants, most of whom had been awakened under Mr. Crook's faithful ministry.[3]

The conference, at Leeds, opened on the 1st of August, and "a more loving one," says Wesley, "we never had." The *Intelligencer* newspaper, of August 8, tells the public,

[1] *Irish Evangelist*, May, 1862.
[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 362.
[3] C. Wesley's Journal, vol. ii., p. 117.

1769 Age 66 that, "for a week past, Wesley had held a kind of visitation, but what they call a conference, with several hundreds of his preachers, from most parts of Great Britain and Ireland, where he settled their several routes for the succeeding year." It further states, that "a large sum of money" was collected for the purpose of "sending missionaries to America."[1]

This was the "tall talk" of a newspaper. "Wesley's itinerant preachers" throughout the entire kingdom were only one hundred and eleven in number; and the "large sum" collected for sending missionaries to America was £70, of which £50 was to be appropriated to the payment of the debt on the chapel in New York.

Above two days of the time of the conference were spent in the arrangement of temporal matters,—a thing which annoyed Wesley, who therefore directed that, in future, as much of such business as possible should be done by the secretaries before the conference met.

The two topics of most interest were Methodist missions, and the perpetuation of the Methodist system after Wesley's death.

It is a fact worth remembering, that already, for years past, Methodism had been planted in the West Indian islands, by means of Nathaniel Gilbert and his co-workers. Laurence Coughlan had recently taken it to Newfoundland; and a few soldiers had established it at Gibraltar, where there were thirty-two members, fifteen of whom were rejoicing in the consciousness of personal pardon.[2] They had preaching every night and every morning, their preachers being "Brother Morton," Henry Ince, of the 2nd Regiment, and Henry Hall, of the Royal Scots; six classmeetings were held every week, and the work was prospering.[3] Lord Cornwallis, the commanding officer, issued a garrison order on June 9, 1769, as follows:—"Whereas divers soldiers and inhabitants assemble themselves every evening to prayer, it is the governor's positive order, that no person whatever presume to molest them, nor go into their meeting to behave indecently there."[4]

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[1] Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i., p. 380.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1784, p. 112.
[3] Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i., p. 387.
[4] Rule's "Memoir of a Mission to Gibraltar," p. 5.

Wesley was acquainted with this; but not a word is found in the conference minutes concerning it. The truth is, while Methodism was now really planted in the West Indies, Newfoundland, Gibraltar, and America, none needed help except America, and, hence, none else are mentioned. 1769 Age 6

Wesley, his brother, Ingham, and Whitefield had all been in America; and Whitefield was about to go again. The work was begun in Georgia by the Wesleys. At the same time, occurred the revival in New England, under Mr. Edwards and others. Whitefield came, and not only preached in both, but likewise all the way between, a distance of many hundred miles. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, were converted by his ministry; but, for want of organisation and discipline, the greater part of them had backslidden.[1] Such was the state of things in 1769.

Four years before this, a small number of Methodist emigrants from Ireland had landed in New York, one of them being Philip Embury. In 1766, another Methodist family followed, of the name of Heck. Mrs. Barbara Heck was distressed to find that her predecessors had greatly declined in godliness. At her request, Philip Embury began to preach; just at that juncture, Captain Webb, the barrackmaster at Albany, joined him; a chapel was built; a society formed; and help was asked from England.[2] Hence the thirteenth question at the conference of 1769: "We have a pressing call from our brethren at New York, who have built a preaching house, to come over and help them. Who is willing to go?" Answer: "Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor." *Q.* "What can we do further in token of our brotherly love? *A.* "Let us now make a collection among ourselves. This

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. vii., p. 392.

[2] About the same time, Thomas Bell, at Charlestown, wrote as follows: "Mr. Wesley says, the first message of the preachers is to the lost sheep of England. And are there none in America? They have strayed from England into the wild woods here, and they are running wild after this world. They are drinking their wine in bowls, and are jumping and dancing, and serving the devil, in the groves and under the green trees. And are not these lost sheep? And will none of the preachers come here? Where is Mr. Brownfield? Where is John Pawson? Where is Nicholas Manners? Are they living, and will they not come?"—("The Centenary of Methodism," published by the Primitive Methodists in Ireland, in 1839, p. 189.)

1769 Age 66 was immediately done; and, out of it, £50 were allotted towards the payment of their debt, and about £20 given to our brethren for their passage."

It is doubtful, however, whether this was, as is generally supposed, the first collection which the Methodists made on behalf of their American mission. Six months before this, Wesley had permitted Robert Costerdine, who was then the assistant in the Sheffield circuit, to "*read publicly, on any Sunday* he liked, the letter which had been received from New York, and to "receive what the hearers were willing to give."[1] It is more than possible, that this was done; but, be that as it may, Boardman and Pilmoor set sail, and, after a nine-weeks' passage, entered upon their work: Pilmoor at Philadelphia, and Boardman at New York. At Philadelphia, they found Captain Webb and a society of about a hundred members, to whom, and to thousands more, Pilmoor commenced preaching from the grand stand erected on the race-course. At New York, Boardman says, the chapel would contain about 1700 hearers; and that about a third part of the congregations got in, and the other two thirds were glad to hear without.[2]

Space forbids further details, except to add that, two years afterwards, the number of Methodists in America was reported in the minutes of conference as 316; and that even a thing so innocent as sending preachers to America was too important for the wicked to pass without a sneer. Hence, in a squib, the public were informed, that the following promotions in the Church were about to be declared: "Rev. G. Whitefield, Archbishop of Boston; Rev. W. Romaine, Bishop of New York; Rev. J. Wesley, Bishop of Pennsylvania; Rev. M. Madan, Bishop of the Carolinas; Rev. W. Shirley, Bishop of Virginia; and Rev. C. Wesley, Bishop of Nova Scotia." It was added, that as his majesty would soon have the livings of these gentlemen at his disposal, he intended to provide for Dr. Dodd, and other court celebrities,[3] anxious to fill important places.

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 578.
[2] Ibid. 1783, p. 276; and 1784, p. 163.
[3] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, May 26, 1769.

The other important matter brought before the conference of 1769 was the perpetuation of Methodism after Wesley's death; and, on Friday, August 4, Wesley read the following paper. 1769 Age 66

"MY DEAR BRETHREN,—1. It has long been my desire, that all those *ministers* of our Church, who believe and preach salvation by faith, might cordially agree between themselves, and not hinder but help one another. After occasionally pressing this, in private conversation, wherever I had opportunity, I wrote down my thoughts upon the head, and sent them to each in a letter. Out of fifty or sixty, to whom I wrote, only three vouchsafed me an answer. So I give this up. I can do no more. They are a rope of sand, and such they will continue.

"2. But it is otherwise with the *travelling preachers* in our connexion. You are at present one body. You act in concert with each other, and by united counsels. And now is the time to consider what can be done, in order to continue this union. Indeed, as long as I live, there will be no great difficulty. I am, under God, a centre of union to all our travelling, as well as local preachers. They all know me and my communication. They all love me for my works' sake; and, therefore, were it only out of regard to me, they will continue connected with each other. But by what means may this connection be preserved, when God removes me from you?

"3. I take it for granted, it cannot be preserved, by any means, between those who have not a single eye. Those who aim at anything but the glory of God, and the salvation of men; who desire or seek any earthly thing, whether honour, profit, or ease, will not, cannot continue in the connexion; it will not answer their design. Some of them, perhaps a fourth of the whole number, will procure preferment in the Church. Others will turn Independents, and get separate congregations, like John Edwards and Charles Skelton. Lay your accounts with this, and be not surprised if some, you do not suspect, be of this number.

"4. But what method can be taken, to preserve a firm union between those who choose to remain together? Perhaps you might take some such steps as these. On notice of my death, let all the preachers, in England and Ireland, repair to London within six weeks. Let them seek God by solemn fasting and prayer. Let them draw up articles of agreement, to be signed by those who choose to act in concert. Let those be dismissed, who do not choose it, in the most friendly manner possible. Let them choose by votes a *committee* of three, five, or seven, each of whom is to be *moderator* in his turn. Let the committee do what I do now; propose preachers to be tried, admitted, or excluded; fix the place of each preacher for the ensuing year, and the time of next conference.

"5. Can anything be done now, in order to lay a foundation for this future union? Would it not be well, for any that are willing, to sign some articles of agreement before God calls me hence? Suppose something like these:—

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"'We, whose names are underwritten, being thoroughly convinced of the necessity of a close union between those whom God is pleased to use as instruments in this glorious work, in order to preserve this union between ourselves, are resolved, God being our helper: (1) *To devote ourselves entirely to God;* denying ourselves, taking up our cross daily, steadily aiming at one thing, to save our own souls, and them that hear us. (2) To preach the *old Methodist doctrines*, and no other, contained in the minutes of the conferences. (3) To observe and enforce the whole *Methodist discipline*, laid down in the said minutes.'"

Such was Wesley's propounded scheme. The preachers wisely requested Wesley to extract the most material part of the minutes, and to send a copy to each itinerant, to be seriously considered,—a request with which Wesley complied during the following year, by the publication of a pamphlet of sixty pages, entitled, "Minutes of several Conversations between the Rev. Messrs. John and Charles Wesley and others."

This concluded the business of the conference; and "at the conclusion," says Wesley, "all the preachers were melted down, while they were singing those lines for me,—

'Thou, who so long hast saved me here,
A little longer save;
Till freed from sin, and freed from fear,
I sink into a grave:
Till glad I lay my body down,
Thy servant's steps attend;
And O! my life of mercies crown
With a triumphant end.'"[1]

This was a beautiful finish to one of the most important conferences Wesley ever held. The next day, he again started on his itinerancy of mercy, and hastened to join in the anniversary services of the Countess of Huntingdon's college at Trevecca. These services really extended from August 18 to August 24, though Wesley himself was there only on the two concluding days. The gathering was a glorious one. Fletcher, the president, was there, with his seraphic soul lighting up an almost unearthly face; Daniel Rowlands also, the rector of Llangeitto and chaplain to the Duke of Leinster; Howel Harris, one of the bravest veterans in the group; the Rev. Walter Shirley, from Ireland, and others; making eight clergymen altogether; to whom must be added the Countess of Hunt-

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1799, p. 253.

ingdon, the Countess of Buchan, Lady Anne Erskine, and several of their relatives and friends. There were a number of Welsh exhorters; and, of course, the students; and likewise an immense concourse of communicants and spectators. For seven days, there was preaching twice a day; the sacrament was repeatedly administered; a lovefeast was held; baskets of bread and meat were distributed in the courtyard among the country people; and the whole season was what Whitefield called a pentecost.[1] Wesley preached twice, gave an exhortation, and administered the Lord's supper to the countess's family, and so ended his service in connection with what he designates "the anniversary of her ladyship's *school*." This was his first and last visit. 1769 Age 66

At this time, Joseph Benson, now in the twenty-first year of his age, was classical master of Wesley's school at Kingswood, and had, with Wesley's sanction, entered himself at St. Edmund's hall, Oxford, where he regularly kept his terms. But now an effort was made to obtain his services as head master at Trevecca. Wesley, for more reasons than one, was loth to lose him. Hence the letters following.

"CORK, *May* 27, 1769.

"DEAR JOSEPH,—You have now—what you never had before—a clear providential call to Oxford. If you keep a single eye, and have courage and steadiness, you may be an instrument of much good. But you will tread on slippery ground; and the serious persons you mention may do you more hurt than many others. When I was at Oxford, I never was afraid of any but the almost Christians. If you give way to them and their prudence a hair's breadth, you will be removed from the hope of the gospel. If you are not moved, if you tread in the same steps which my brother and I did, you may be the means, under God, of raising another set of real Bible Christians. How long the world will suffer them is in God's hand.

"With regard to Kingswood school, I have one string more; if that breaks, I shall let it drop. I have borne the burden one-and-twenty years; I have done what I could; now, let some one else do more.

"I am, dear Joseph, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Again.

"LONDON, *December* 26, 1769.

"DEAR JOSEPH,—Every man of sense, who reads the rules of the

[1] "Life and Times of Countess of Huntingdon," vol. ii., p. 99.
[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 383.

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school, may easily conclude that a school so conducted by men of piety and understanding will exceed any other school or academy in Great Britain or Ireland. In this sentiment, you can never be altered. And if it was not so conducted since you were there, why was it not? You had power enough. You have all the power which I have. You may do what you please.

"'*Dirue et ædifica; muta quadrata rotundis;*' and I will second you to the uttermost.

"Trevecca is much more to —— than Kingswood is to me. *I* mixes with everything. It is *my* college, *my* masters, *my* students. I do not speak so of this school. It is not mine, but the Lord's. I look for no more honour than money from it.

"I am glad you defer your journey; and am, dear Joseph, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Wesley was evidently sore about Benson leaving him; but, a few weeks afterwards, the exchange was made; and then, after nine months of faithful service at Trevecca, the young head master was unceremoniously dismissed, because of his defending the doctrines of his friend Wesley.

From Trevecca, Wesley made his way to Bristol, which he reached on August 26; and, from there, set off to Cornwall, where he employed a week in visiting as many of his societies as he could in so short a period. On getting back to Bristol, he inquired into the state of Kingswood school, and writes: "The grievance now is the number of children. Instead of thirty, as I desired, we have near fifty; whereby our masters are burdened. And it is scarce possible to keep them in so exact order as we might do a smaller number. However, this still comes nearer a Christian school than any I know in the kingdom."

The next month was spent in the neighbourhood of Bristol, and was not without adventures. At Bradford, he was surrounded by a noisy rabble; "and one," says he, "called a gentleman, had filled his pocket with rotten eggs; but a young man smashed them all at once; and, in an instant, he was perfume all over, though it was not so sweet as balsam."

At Salisbury, the scene of so many of his sister Patty's sorrows, Wesley writes: "I was as in a new world. The congregation was alive, and much more the society. How

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 384.

pleasing would it be, to be always with such! But this is not our calling." Wesley had seen dark days here; but now the sun was shining. After the desolation caused by Westley Hall's disgraceful conduct, the few remaining Methodists took possession of a shop in Greencroft Street, and then, in 1759, built themselves a chapel.[1] Barbara Hunt was one of their chief members,—a brave young woman, now thirty-three years old, but who lived long enough to be a Methodist threescore years and three, and died exclaiming, "O how glad should I be to clap my glad wings and tower away!"[2] Another was David Saunders, the hero of Mrs. Hannah More's "Shepherd of Salisbury Plain." "His coat," says the fair authoress, perhaps mixing a little fiction with fact,—"his coat had been, in a long course of years, so often patched with different sorts of cloth, that it was now become hard to say which had been the original colour; his stockings were covered with darns of different coloured worsted, but had not a hole in them; his shirt, though nearly as coarse as the sails of a ship, was as white as the drifted snow; his open honest countenance bore strong marks of health and cheerfulness." His good wife was cleanly, thrifty, and a hard worker; and a happier man than the "shepherd of Salisbury plain" did not exist. David Saunders was a shepherd in more respects than one. While he tended his sheep, he also, as a faithful classleader, watched over the souls committed to his care. He died in peace, in 1796, at the age of eighty.[3] 1769 Age 66

Wesley got back to London on October 14, but two days afterwards set out for Oxfordshire, and spent the week in preaching at Henley, Wallingford, Oxford, Witney, Broadmarston, and Wycombe. The last week in October he employed at Towcester, Northampton, Weedon, Bedford, and other intervening towns, preaching, during his five days' tour, not fewer than seventeen times in widely distant places.

At the beginning of November he went to Norfolk; at the end, he visited his old friend Perronet, at Shoreham, and preached twice in his parish church. Even here, in the vicar's kitchen, there was Methodist preaching every Friday night, and also a Methodist society, embracing Mr. Kingswood, Mr.

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1836, p. 52. [2] Ibid. 1815, p. 46.
[3] "Methodism in Frome," by Tuck, p. 42.

1769 Age 66 Sharp, old Mrs. Lightfoot and her servant maid, poor dame Cacket, and bold, masculine minded Miss D. Perronet at the head of them.[1]

Except short tours to Kent and Sussex, the remainder of the year was employed in London, where he received letters from Boardman and Pilmoor in America, and which he read to the London society. He was importuned to visit America himself; and, though such a visit was utterly impracticable, yet he was far from hasty in declining it. Hence the following, addressed to his friend, the Rev. Walter Sellon.

"LONDON, *December* 30, 1769.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—It is not yet determined whether I should go to America or not. I have been importuned some time; but *nil sat firmi video.* I must have a clear call before I am at liberty to leave Europe.

"You should heat your milk, but never let it boil; boiling robs it of the most nutritious particles. Do not make too much haste in dealing with Elisha Coles; I am afraid the treatise will be too short. And pray add a word to that lively coxcomb, Mr. Toplady, not only with regard to Zanchius, but his slander on the Church of England. You would do well to give a reading to both his tracts. He does certainly believe himself to be the greatest genius in England. Pray take care, or *natis sit pro suis virtutibus.*

"I am, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Mr. Toplady's two tracts, referred to in this epistle, were his (1) "Church of England Vindicated from the Charge of Arminianism, in a Letter to the Rev. Dr. Nowell; occasioned by some passages in that gentleman's answer to the Author of 'Pietas Oxoniensis,'" 8vo, 136 pages: and (2) "The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination Stated and Asserted. Translated, in great measure, from the Latin of Jerom Zanchius, with some Account of his Life prefixed," 8vo, 134 pages. Both these pamphlets were published in 1769.

All this, and a great deal more, really arose out of the expulsion of the Oxford students in 1768. Sir Richard Hill, in defending them, had warmly defended the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination. Dr. Nowell, in his Answer, had clearly shown, that this was not the doctrine of the Church of

[1] Miss Perronet's manuscript letters; and *Methodist Magazine*, 1811, p. 234.

[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 42; and manuscript letter.

England; and now impetuous Augustus Toplady hastened to the rescue, and administered two allopathic doses of Calvinism's most drastic tincture, to cure the Church of Arminian disease and fever. Toplady's style is trenchant; his doctrines are as near an approach to the doctrine of fate, as held by Plato, Seneca, and other heathen writers, as it is possible to conceive. A more impious piece, in the garb of piety, was never published than his Zanchius; while his "Church of England Vindicated" is rank with the most dogmatic and violent abuse of Dr. Nowell and the Arminian clergy. It would be easy, but not pleasant, to give extracts; and we can hardly recommend the reader to peruse the pamphlets for himself. Augustus Toplady, a stripling twenty-nine years of age, is a pope infallible; and all who hold opinions different to his are reprobate knaves, or fools. 1769 Age 66

Wesley was sick of controversial writing; and, besides, he had no time for it. Walter Sellon had leisure at his command, and had already this year published his able treatise, entitled, "The Doctrine of General Redemption considered," 12mo, 178 pages. He was also now engaged in refuting a book hardly less horrible than the Zanchius of Augustus Toplady, namely, "A Practical Discourse of God's Sovereignty," 12mo, 347 pages, by Elisha Coles, a clerk to the East India Company, who died in 1688. Sellon's book was soon issued, with the title, "A Defence of God's Sovereignty, against the impious and horrible Aspersions cast upon it by Elisha Coles, in his practical treatise on that subject." In his preface, he tells his readers, he "did intend to have exposed the errors and blasphemy" of Toplady's Zanchius, but when he "found it would enlarge his work too much, and especially when he understood that Toplady had vilely slandered the Church of England," he chose "to make it the subject of another book, which the reader might expect unless it should be done by some abler hand."[1]

[1] Sellon's book was not published till 1770, and seems to have been revised by Wesley, who also approved of his dealing with Toplady in a separate pamphlet. Hence the following, addressed to Sellon.

"LEWISHAM, *February* 21, 1770.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Do not make too much haste. Give everything the last touch. It will be enough, if the papers meet me at Man-

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Controversial war was now begun in earnest, and a severer battle was never fought. Sir Richard Hill, Augustus Toplady, and Walter Sellon were fairly in the lists, and others soon after followed.

In the midst of all this, Wesley was savagely attacked in two letters, published in the *Gospel Magazine* for 1769, entitled, "Observations on Mr. J. Wesley's view of 'The Scripture Doctrines of Predestination, Election, and Reprobation.'" He is accused of "inexcusable vanity"; of "impertinent quibbling"; of "jesuitical sophistry"; of holding "a scheme unscriptural and dangerous, absurd and impious"; and of "finespun reasoning worse than nothing." The author complacently tells his readers, in conclusion, that, though he had felt himself "very resentful," yet being "called to imitate the lovely pattern of the lowly Jesus, he had answered Wesley not with asperity, but with the meekness of wisdom."

Attacks upon Wesley were made from other quarters. It was a busy year with young Toplady; for, besides the books already noticed, he published a sixpenny pamphlet, with the title, "Many made Righteous by the Obedience of One. Two Sermons on Romans v. 19, preached at Bideford, in 1743, by the late Rev. James Hervey, with a Preface by Augustus Toplady." Some one else issued another, entitled, "The Jesuit Detected," in which the zealous advocate of Mr. Hervey arrays Wesley in the garb of the Babylonian woman, and then abuses him for looking so like her. Booth Brathwaite, unknown to fame, published another sixpennyworth, called "Methodism a Popish Idol; or, the Danger and Harmony of Enthusiasm and Separation." Poor Booth, a bigot to church establishments, raves against sectaries with abundant zeal, little knowledge, and less charity. And to all these must be added, "The Pretences of Enthusiasts, considered and confuted: A Sermon preached before the university of Oxford, at St. Mary's, on Sunday, June 26,

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chester, before the end of March. I believe it will be the best way to bestow a distinct pamphlet on that exquisite coxcomb. Surely wisdom will die with him! I believe we can easily get his other tract, which it would be well to sift to the very foundation, in order to stop the mouth of that vain boaster. I am, etc., JOHN WESLEY."—(Manuscript letter.)

1768. By William Hawkins, M.A., Prebendary of Wells, late Poetry Professor, and Fellow of Pembroke College, in Oxford. Published by desire." 8vo, 27 pages. 1769 Age 66

Wesley's own publications in 1769 were not many.

1. "An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal, from October 20, 1762, to May 25, 1765." 12mo, 124 pages.

2. "An Extract from the Journal of Elizabeth Harper." 12mo, 47 pages.

3. "An Extract of Letters on Religious Subjects, by Mrs. Lefevre." 12mo, 106 pages.

4. "The Witness of the Spirit. A Sermon on Romans viii. 16." Dublin: 12mo, 16 pages. This important sermon was written at Newry, in 1767. Wesley declares that his sentiments on the witness of the Spirit were the same as they had been from the beginning. "The testimony of the Spirit," says he, "is an inward impression on the soul of believers, whereby the Spirit of God directly testifies to their spirit, that they are the children of God." Having established his doctrine, and answered the objections to it, he concludes with two pungent inferences: "1. Let none ever presume to rest in any supposed testimony of the Spirit, which is separate from the fruit of it. 2. Let none rest in any supposed fruit of the Spirit without the witness."

5. "Advices with respect to Health. Extracted from a late Author." 12mo, 218 pages. The late author was Dr. Tissot; the book itself shows Wesley's intense anxiety to be of use to the bodies as well as souls of his fellow creatures. He strongly commends Tissot's descriptions of diseases, the fewness and cheapness of his medicines, and his regimen; but protests against his fondness for bleeding, and for glysters; against his ointment for the itch, and his vehement recommendation of Peruvian bark.

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WESLEY began the year 1770 with a covenant service in London, at which eighteen hundred Methodists were present,—a sight worth seeing.

In his leisure moments, he employed himself in reading; and, as usual, makes racy remarks on men and books. Having finished Dr. Burnet's "Theory of the Earth," he writes: "He is doubtless one of the firstrate writers, both as to sense and style; his language is remarkably clear, unaffected, nervous, and elegant; and none can deny, that his theory is ingenious, and consistent with itself." He read Rousseau upon education, and says: "But how was I disappointed! Sure a more consummate coxcomb never saw the sun! How amazingly full of himself! Whatever he speaks, he pronounces as an oracle. But many of his oracles are as palpably false as that 'young children never love old people.' But I object to his temper more than to his judgment: he is a mere misanthrope, a cynic all over. So indeed is his brother infidel, Voltaire; and well-nigh as great a coxcomb. But he hides both his doggedness and vanity a little better; whereas, here it stares us in the face continually. As to his book, it is whimsical to the last degree; grounded neither upon reason nor experience. The advices, which are good, are trite and common, only disguised under new expressions; and those which are new, which are really his own, are lighter than vanity itself. Such discoveries I always expect from those who are too wise to believe their Bibles."

Baron Emanuel Swedenborg, after rendering great service to science, and thereby winning the esteem of Charles XII., and receiving the honour of being enrolled among the members of the academies of Upsal, Stockholm, and Petersburgh, came to London in 1743, attended the Moravian chapel in Fetter Lane, went mad,[1] and began to write and publish the visionary books, containing the creed of the Sweden-

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1781, p. 46.

borgians. Wesley writes: "I sat down to read and seriously consider some of the writings of Baron Swedenborg. I began with huge prejudice in his favour, knowing him to be a pious man, one of a strong understanding, of much learning, and one who thoroughly believed himself. But I could not hold out long. Any one of his visions puts his real character out of doubt. He is one of the most ingenious, lively, entertaining madmen, that ever set pen to paper. But his waking dreams are so wild, so far remote both from Scripture and common sense, that one might as easily swallow the stories of 'Tom Thumb,' or 'Jack the Giant Killer.'" The baron died two years after this, and was buried in the Swedish church in Wellclose Square, London. 1770 Age 67

In the month of February, Wesley, for the last time, took part in a religious service, and administered the sacrament, in the mansion of the Countess of Huntingdon, in Portland Row. Thomas Maxfield was present, and though a few years before he had been one of the strongest sticklers in favour of the wild doctrines propounded by George Bell and other sanctified ones in London, he now, in Wesley's own presence, spoke strongly against his doctrine of Christian perfection.[1] This might be gratifying to her ladyship and her Calvinistic friends; but it would have been in better taste for Maxfield, at least, to have maintained, on such a subject, a respectful silence. No doubt, foolish ideas had been circulated; but Wesley can hardly be held accountable for these. His own doctrines on the subject were based upon Scripture, and these he was ready to defend, and resolved to propagate. It is true, that his anticipations respecting the great work, which was professedly wrought in London and elsewhere, had not been realised. Even Miss Bosanquet had lost the blessing of Christian perfection;[2] and Wesley, in a letter dated March 15, 1770, confesses that, of those who professed to obtain it, hardly one in thirty retained it. "Many hundreds in London," says he, "were made partakers of it, within sixteen or eighteen months; but I doubt whether twenty of them are now as holy and as happy as they were."[3] This was a humili-

[1] "Life and Times of Countess of Huntingdon," vol. i., p. 387.
[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 375. [3] Ibid. p. 350.

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ating fact, and gave to Wesley's opponents a great advantage; but, in itself, it was no disproof of Wesley's doctrine; and can scarcely be considered a satisfactory excuse for Thomas Maxfield, of all men living, attacking his friend in the house of his Calvinistic foes.

Wesley's friend Whitefield was in America, preaching with as much zest as ever; and, just at this juncture, Wesley addressed what proved to be his last letter to his old and always faithful coadjutor; but the letter contains not a single syllable respecting the slight which had been cast upon him by a man whom gratitude ought to have taught better manners.

"LEWISHAM, *February* 21, 1770.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Mr. Keen informed me some time since of your safe arrival in Carolina; of which, indeed, I could not doubt for a moment, notwithstanding the idle report of your being cast away, which was so current in London. I trust our Lord has more work for you to do in Europe, as well as in America. And who knows but before your return, to England, I may pay another visit to the new world? I have been strongly solicited by several of our friends in New York and Philadelphia. They urge many reasons, some of which appear to be of considerable weight; and my age is no objection at all; for I bless God my health is not barely as good, but abundantly better in several respects, than when I was five-and-twenty. But there are so many reasons on the other side, that, as yet, I can determine nothing; so I must wait for further light. Here I am: let the Lord do with me as seemeth Him good. For the present, I must beg of you to supply my lack of service, by encouraging our preachers, as you judge best (who are as yet comparatively young and inexperienced); by giving them such advices as you think proper; and, above all, by exhorting them, not only to love one another, but, if it be possible, as much as lies in them, to live peaceably with all men.

"Some time ago, since you went hence, I heard a circumstance, which gave me a good deal of concern; namely, that the college or academy in Georgia had swallowed up the orphan house. Shall I give my judgment without being asked? Methinks, friendship requires I should. Are there not then two points which come in view? a point of mercy, and a point of justice? With respect to the former, may it not be inquired, Can anything on earth be a greater charity than to bring up orphans? What is a college or an academy compared to this? unless you could have such a college as perhaps is not upon earth. I know the value of learning, and am more in danger of prizing it too much than too little; but, still, I cannot place the giving it to five hundred students on a level with saving the bodies, if not the souls too, of five hundred orphans. But let us pass from the point of mercy to that of justice. You had land given, and collected money, for an orphan house. Are you at liberty to apply this to

any other purpose? at least, while there are any orphans in Georgia left? I just touch upon this, though it is an important point, and leave it to your own consideration, whether part of it, at least, might not properly be applied to carry on the original design? In speaking thus freely, on so tender a subject, I have given you a fresh proof of the sincerity with which I am your ever affectionate friend and brother, 1770 Age 67

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

The college business above mentioned was simply this. Six years before, Whitefield had informed the council of Georgia, that he had already expended £12,000 upon his Orphan House; that he was now anxious to attach to it a college, to which the respectable inhabitants of Georgia, Virginia, and the West Indies might send their sons to be educated; that, in order to accomplish his purpose, he was prepared to lay out a considerable sum of money "*in purchasing a large number of negroes*" for the cultivation of the lands, and for the "future support of a president, professors, and tutors;" and that he now asked the council to grant him, in trust, for the purposes aforesaid, two thousand acres of land, on the north fork of Turtle River. The council yielded his request at once, and with the greatest pleasure. Whitefield then memorialised the king to grant a charter for the founding of the college, stating that, if this were done, he was "ready to give up his present trust, and make a free gift of all lands, negroes, goods, and chattels, which he now possessed in Georgia, for the support of the proposed institution, to be called by the name of Bethesda college, in Georgia." A long official correspondence followed. The government were not unwilling to grant a charter, but they insisted that the president of the college should be a minister of the Church of England, and that there should be a daily use of the Church liturgy. These were conditions which Whitefield respectfully declined; and hence the charter asked for was refused. The result was, Whitefield added to his Georgian orphan house a public academy, by the erection of two additional wings, one hundred and fifty feet each in length; and, a month before Wesley wrote his letter, opened the new building, by preaching before his excellency the governor, and before the

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 148.

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Georgian council and assembly, from, "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundations of this house, His hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you; for who hath despised the day of small things?" Thus Whitefield left behind him, in America, a complex orphanage and college, for the support of which he had obtained grants of land to the extent of 3800 acres, and had bought seventy-five male and female negroes for the purpose of cultivating his extensive farm, and making it productive.[1]

We have already seen that Wesley was not only urged, but was more than willing, to visit his newly instituted societies in America. Pilmoor was working hard at New York, and Boardman at Philadelphia; a number of negroes had been converted; the work was growing; and the young evangelists —Boardman of seven, and Pilmoor of five years' standing —wished for advice and help.[2] Wesley had nearly arrived at the age of threescore years and ten; but, if his way had opened, he would have bounded off across the Atlantic with as little anxiety as he was accustomed to trot to the hospitable Perronet home at Shoreham. The obstacles however were insurmountable. There was no one, during his absence, to take his place as superintendent general of the societies in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland; and to this must be added the strong objections of the people to let him go. "If I go to America," said he, "I must do a thing which I hate as bad as I hate the devil." "What is that?" asked his friend. "I must keep a *secret*," he answered; meaning, that he must conceal his purpose, otherwise his societies would interfere, and effectually prevent his going.[3]

On the 5th of March, Wesley set out on his journey to the north, which occupied the next five months. Coming to Newbury, he writes: "I had been much importuned to preach here. But where? The Dissenters would not permit me to preach in their meetinghouse. Some were then desirous to hire the old playhouse; but the good mayor would not suffer it to be so profaned! So I made use of a

[1] Whitefield's Works, vol. iii. [2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1784, p. 224.
[3] Whitehead's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 345.

workshop,—a large, commodious place. But it would, by no means, contain the congregation. All that could hear behaved well." 1770 Age 67

From Newbury, Wesley proceeded to Bristol, Gloucester, Birmingham, and Wednesbury. He then made his way, through Staffordshire and Cheshire, to Manchester, where he arrived at the end of March, and made the following characteristic entry in his journal: "In this journey, as well as in many others, I observed a mistake that almost universally prevails. Near thirty years ago, I was thinking, 'How is it that no horse ever stumbles while I am reading?' (History, poetry, and philosophy, I commonly read on horseback, having other employment at other times.) No account can possibly be given but this: because, then I throw the reins on his neck. I then set myself to observe; and I aver, that, in riding above a hundred thousand miles, I scarce ever remember any horse (except two that would fall head over heels any way), to fall, or make a considerable stumble, while I rode with a slack rein. To fancy, therefore, that a tight rein prevents stumbling is a capital blunder. I have repeated the trial more frequently than most men in the kingdom can do. A slack rein will prevent stumbling if anything will. But in some horses nothing can."

From Manchester, Wesley proceeded to Liverpool, Whitehaven, and Carlisle, preaching there, and at intermediate places. He writes: "At Carlisle, it was the day of small things; the society consisting but of fifteen members." Methodism had been founded in this border city by Robert Bell, an exciseman; and its place of worship was a shed for sheltering carts. At almost every meeting the mob attended; stones and brickbats were often thrown, and the Methodists hissed at and otherwise abused.[1]

Leaving Carlisle, Wesley made his way to Edinburgh, which he reached on April 20, and says: "I endeavoured to confirm those whom many had strove to turn out of the way. What pity is it, that the children of God should so zealously do the devil's work! How is it, that they are still ignorant of Satan's devices? Lord, what is man?" "The congrega-

[1] Thomas Dixon's manuscript journal.

1770 Age 67 tions were nearly as usual; but the society which, when I was here before, consisted of above one hundred and sixty members, was now shrunk to about fifty. Such is the fruit of a single preacher's staying a whole year in one place, together with the labours of good Mr. Townshend!"

It was at this time that Wesley had his first interview with Lady Glenorchy.[1] She writes: "The Rev. Dr. Webster[2] and Mr. Wesley met at my house, and agreed on all doctrines on which they spoke, except those of God's decrees, predestination, and the saints' perseverance. I must, according to the light I now have, agree with Dr. Webster. Nevertheless, I hope Mr. Wesley is a child of God. He has been an instrument of saving souls; as such, I honour him, and will countenance his preachers. I have heard him preach thrice; and should have been better pleased had he preached more of Christ, and less of himself."[3]

Lady Glenorchy had recently opened St. Mary's chapel, in which service was performed by presbyterians, episcopalians, and Methodists; but her ladyship now wished to have a schoolmaster and a minister of her own; and, notwithstanding her disparaging remarks on Wesley, she employed him to obtain them for her. A few weeks later she wrote to him as follows.

"EDINBURGH, *May* 29, 1770.

"REVEREND SIR,—When I consider how much you have to do, and how very precious your time is, I feel unwilling to give you the trouble of reading a letter from me; yet I know not how to delay returning you my best thanks for the pains you have taken to procure me a Christian innkeeper and schoolmaster. And, though you have not as yet been successful, I hope you may find some before you reach London, who are willing to leave their native country and friends for the sake of promoting the interest of Christ's kingdom. If Mr. Eggleston's objections relate only to temporal things, perhaps it may be in my power to remove them. I am exceedingly obliged to you, dear and honoured sir, for your good advice; it is agreeable to that small glimmering of light the Lord has been pleased to give me for five years past. Let me entreat you to

[1] "Life of Lady Glenorchy," p. 155.

[2] One of the ministers of the Tolbooth church,—a man of great abilities and of polished manners, but an avowed Calvinist of the highest order.—(Lady Glenorchy's Life, p. 132.)

[3] "Life of Lady Glenorchy," p. 156.

remember me at the throne of grace. I am, reverend sir, with esteem and respect, your obliged servant, 1770 Age 67

"WILLIELMA GLENORCHY."[1]

Within a week after this, Wesley obtained her ladyship a schoolmaster; and, at the beginning of the year following, sent her a minister, the Rev. Richard De Courcy, who had been a Methodist in Ireland,[2] had been educated at Trinity college, Dublin, had obtained deacon's orders, and had officiated as curate to Walter Shirley.[3] Lady Glenorchy writes: "Mr. De Courcy is quite the person Mr. Wesley represented him,—of a sweet disposition, and wishes only to preach Christ to poor sinners wherever he finds an open door."[4] This was in February, 1771, and yet, within six months afterwards, on June 28, her ladyship writes again: "Before I left Edinburgh, I dismissed Mr. Wesley's preachers from my chapel; first, because they deny the doctrines of imputed righteousness, election, and the saints' perseverance; secondly, because I found none of our gospel ministers would preach in the chapel, if they continued to have the use of the pulpit; thirdly, because I found my own soul had been hurt by hearing them, and I judged that others might be hurt by them also."[5]

Thus, after Wesley had served her ladyship to the utmost of his power, he and his preachers were ignominiously expelled from the sacred precincts of St. Mary's, and her chapel was left in the sole possession of Mr. De Courcy and his Calvinistic friends. It is right to add that, notwithstanding her Calvinism, Lady Glenorchy maintained, to the end of life, a warm friendship with her Methodist friend, Lady Maxwell, whom, at her death, she appointed her sole executrix, and the principal manager of her chapels, both in England and across the border.[6]

To return to Wesley. From Edinburgh, he went to Perth, Dunkeld, and Inverness, at which last mentioned place Benjamin and William Chappel had been three months

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1784, p. 279.
[2] "Life of Lady Glenorchy," pp. 163, 226.
[3] "Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon," vol. i., p. 157.
[4] Lady Glenorchy's Life, p. 223. [5] Ibid. p. 239.
[6] *Methodist Magazine*, 1816, p. 730.

1770 Age 67 waiting for a vessel to return to London, and had employed the time in meeting the people every night to sing and pray together." Benjamin Chappel, who thus begun Methodism in Inverness, was a wheelwright, and, in after years, had the honour of being the first Methodist in Prince Edward's Island.[1]

At Aberdeen, as at Inverness and Nairn, Wesley preached in the kirk. At Arbroath, the society, though of but nine months' standing, was the largest in Scotland, with the exception of that at Aberdeen. At Dunbar he preached in the new chapel, "the cheerfulest in the kingdom"; and, on May 21, reached Newcastle on Tyne; but here we pause to insert a letter of considerable interest.

Within the last two years, Wesley had met at Bristol with a clergyman, who was one of the king of Sweden's chaplains, but who had recently spent several years in Pennsylvania. This gentleman, Dr. Wrangel, had strongly requested that Wesley would send preachers to America, nearly twelve months before Boardman and Pilmoor were appointed; and, further, to show his friendly feeling towards Methodism he had preached in the Bristol chapel to a crowd of Methodists, and "gave," says Wesley, "general satisfaction by the simplicity and life which accompanied his sound doctrine." Dr. Wrangel had now returned to Sweden, and wrote the following to Wesley.

"STOCKHOLM, *May* 5, 1770.

"DEAR AND MUCH BELOVED BROTHER IN CHRIST JESUS,—I hope my heart will ever be impressed with the warmest gratitude for the comfort I enjoyed in your society. Though absent in body, I have often been amongst you. When I left England, I arrived first at Gothenburg, and lodged at the right reverend bishop, Dr. Lamberg's, who was fellow chaplain with me at court. I found him to be a great friend of yours. He had heard you preach while on his travels in England. I sent him your books, and he was well pleased with what he read, and desired me to remember him to you.

"I have now been upwards of a year in Stockholm, and have officiated as chaplain to the king, and at the same time preached in most of the churches here, and I must say, with uncommon success. Whenever I have preached the churches have been crowded. The king, on his death-bed, made me a privy councillor. When I spoke to him of the way of

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1851, p. 837.

salvation, he received the word with gladness, and departed in the Lord, to the great edification and comfort of the whole family. His queen also, who is of English descent, is eminent in piety. This, I hope, will be attended with good consequences in favour of religion. 1770 Age 67

"Last parliament session several clergymen, and amongst them four bishops, agreed to my proposals concerning a society for propagating practical religion. We intend, as soon as the plan is rightly fixed, to enter into correspondence with several parts of the world; and we expect the honour of your correspondence also.

"Providence is about to settle me in a station of great importance. I am about to be named the almoner of his majesty. This office is of importance to religion in general. Finally, my dear brother, let me be included in all your prayers, and let me hear from you. I am, with the greatest sincerity of affection, dear and reverend brother, your most humble and affectionate brother and servant,

"C. M. WRANGEL."[1]

Further correspondence followed, from which we learn that Dr. Wrangel himself, like Wesley, had been an open air preacher; but was now, not only the king of Sweden's almoner, but "president of the consistory at court, and chaplain to all the royal orders." He writes to Wesley in 1771: "Pray, dear sir, desire your society to intercede for me. I send you enclosed the letter of admission to our society. The rules, not yet being printed in English, we send in German. I sincerely thank you for the kind present of your sermons and books. I presented a copy of your sermon to the society, which was very acceptable. The society will have the life of Mr. Whitefield inserted in their Pastoral Collections, or account of the work of God abroad. I beg of you, sir, to remember me kindly to all your friends, not forgetting dear Kingswood. I have been greatly blessed in my labour amongst the great, and shall soon give a particular account of it."[2]

Thus, as England had its Wesleys, America its Whitefield, and Wales its Howel Harris, Sweden also had its great reformer,—Dr. Wrangel, once a field preacher, but now a founder of a *quasi* missionary society, and, as a faithful minister of Christ, bearing his testimony before kings and princes. Through Dr. Wrangel's friendship with Wesley, Methodism had already, fifty-six years before its appointment

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1784, p. 330. [2] Ibid. 1784, p. 614.

1770 Age 67 of the Rev. Joseph Rayner Stephens to Stockholm, indirectly extended its influences to the Swedish capital, and had begun that wondrous work, which, fostered by the Rev. Dr. Scott, has issued in some of the most remarkable results recorded in mission history.

Wesley left Newcastle for London on the 11th of June, and, on his journey, preached for the most part thrice a day. At Whitby, one of his itinerants, of six years' standing, "had set up for himself; his reasons for leaving the Methodists being—(1) that they went to church; (2) that they held perfection." It is a remarkable fact, that sixty-five of the Whitby Methodists professed to be entirely sanctified. From Whitby, Wesley proceeded along the east coast to Robinhood's Bay, Scarborough, Bridlington, and Hull.

From Hull, he made his way to Beverley, York, Tadcaster, Pateley, Otley, Yeadon, Heptonstall, Colne, Haworth, and Keighley. The Keighley, or Haworth, circuit, at this period, extended from Otley to Whitehaven, à distance of one hundred and twenty miles.[1] Yeadon has just been mentioned. Here James Rhodes began to hold Methodist prayer-meetings as early as 1747; and here his brother Joseph preached the first Methodist sermon in Yeadon, in the house of Judith Jackson. Here Thomas Mitchell, one of Wesley's bravest itinerants, was trained; and here William Darney, while preaching, was attacked by a mob, led on by Reynolds, curate of Guiseley, had eggs thrown at his face, was dragged out of doors, and then stamped upon. Here Jonathan Maskew, by the same godless gang, had his clothes torn off his back, and, in a state of nakedness, was trailed over the rough stone pavement, till he was a mass of bruises. The bush burned, but it was not consumed. In 1766, the first chapel was erected; and now, in 1770, it had to be enlarged.

At the beginning of July, Wesley spent about a week at Leeds, and in the surrounding towns and villages. He visited the orphanage of Miss Bosanquet, who had removed to Cross Hall, Morley. Her friend Sarah Crosby, in a letter dated July 13, 1770, remarks: "Mr. Wesley left Leeds yesterday. I never heard him preach better, if so well. In every sermon

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1814, p. 166.

he set forth 'Christian perfection' in the most beautiful light. 1770
Mr. Rankin, who travels with him, is a blessed man, and Age 67
seems to fear no one's face. I believe there has not been such a time at Leeds for many years."[1]

From Leeds, Wesley proceeded to Doncaster, Epworth, Horncastle, Louth, and other places; and then, turning round, came back to Doncaster, and, from there, went to Rotherham, Sheffield, Derby, and Nottingham, preaching, not only there, but in many of the intervening villages and towns. He writes: "I preached at Bingham, and really admired the exquisite stupidity of the people. They gaped and stared, while I was speaking of death and judgment, as if they had never heard of such things before. And they were not helped by two surly, ill mannered clergymen, who seemed to be just as wise as themselves."

In Loughborough market place, he preached to a congregation of some thousands, all of them still as night. This was his first sermon here; but, four years previous to this, some of his preachers had visited the town, and, among others, converted by their ministry, was Thomas Cook, who in humility, penitence, and self denial, was, even among the first Methodists, almost without an equal. For three months together, he would live on barley bread and water, often fasting, from even nourishment like that, for whole days together, and praying the whole night through. He invariably wore clothing of the coarsest material, and when urged to use an overcoat answered: "When you can assure me, that there is not a poor man destitute of *one* coat, I may then perhaps wear *two*." For ten years, he prayed for all with whom he happened to converse; and as he lived, so he died,—humble, holy, loving, and devout,—saying in answer to a question, and with his characteristc self abasement, "Oh no! no funeral sermon for *me!*"[2]

On Thursday, August 2, after a five months' absence, Wesley got back to London; and, on August 7, met his conference; in reference to which, the following unpublished letter, addressed to Mr. Merryweather, at Yarm, is not without interest.

[1] Manuscript.

[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1807, p. 242.

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"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I have the credit of stationing the preachers; but many of them go where they *will* go, for all me. For instance, I have marked down James Oddie and John Nelson for Yarm circuit the ensuing year; yet, I am not certain that either of them will come. They can give twenty reasons for going elsewhere. Mr. Murlin says, he must be in London. 'Tis certain he has a mind to be there; therefore, so it must be; for you know a man of fortune is master of his own motions.

"I am your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

The difficulties of conference, in stationing preachers, are not novel.

There were now fifty Methodist circuits, one of which was America! There were a hundred and twenty itinerant preachers, and 29,406 members of society. Nearly £2,000 had been subscribed, during the year, towards defraying the chapel debts; and yet, in consequence of new erections, the aggregate debt was about the same. His chapels were becoming Wesley's greatest burdens.[1] It was resolved, that, during the coming year, no new chapel should be built, nor any old one altered, unless the entire expenditure were raised; and a proposal was made to vest all the chapels in a general trust, consisting of persons chosen from among the Methodists throughout the kingdom. This would have been a disastrous mistake. Fortunately it was not adopted.

Kingswood school, as usual, was a trouble. It had been opened two-and-twenty years, and had had, during that period, eight classical masters, five of whom had obtained episcopal ordination, and now a sixth, Joseph Benson, had not only entered himself a graduate at Oxford, but had exchanged Kingswood for Trevecca. No wonder that Wesley, at the conference of 1770, asked, "How can we secure our masters?" The answer was, "Ask each, before he is received, Do you design to stay here? have you any thoughts

[1] The following hitherto unpublished letter was addressed to Matthew Lowes, and refers both to circuit, and connexional chapel, debts.

"LONDON, *March* 2, 1770.

"DEAR MATTHEW,—The way you propose for clearing the circuit is, I think, the very best which can be devised. Only let your fellow labourers second *you heartily*, and the thing will be done.

"Four or five circuits exerted themselves nobly. Had all the rest done the same our burden would have been quite removed. Well, *we* will fight till we die. "I am, etc., J. WESLEY."

of being ordained? have you any design to preach?" It is a fact worth noting, that, during the remainder of Wesley's lifetime, there was only one more classical master who became an ordained clergyman, and that was Mr. Benson's immediate successor, Isaac Twicross.[1] 1770 Age 67

Wesley found, that some of his preachers were still engaged in trade; and, hence, it was now agreed, that those who would not relinquish trading in cloth, hardware, pills, drops, and balsams, should be excluded from the brotherhood; but that, if any of them, like Thomas Hanby, John Oliver, and James Oddie, had a share in ships, there would be no objection to that.[2]

The conference of 1770, however, will always be memorable chiefly, if not entirely, for its doctrinal minutes. From the first, Whitefield, Howel Harris, and their friends, had been Calvinists; and so were many of the evangelical clergy, patronised by the Countess of Huntingdon, as Romaine, Newton, Venn, Berridge, Shirley, and others. At an early period of their history, the two Wesleys agreed, with the Methodist Calvinistic leaders, to avoid preaching on Calvinistic topics to the utmost extent possible. Charles Wesley afterwards endorsed the document with the words "Vain Agreement." So indeed it was: in fact it could hardly be otherwise. Wesley, more than once, tried to meet his friends at a sort of halfway house; but the attempt was dangerous, it exposed Wesley to suspicion, and it issued in a failure. We have already seen that, in 1743, Wesley, for the purpose of terminating their disputes, made concessions to Whitefield, respecting unconditional election, irresistible grace, and final perseverance, which it was impossible to defend. Accordingly, at the conference held a few months afterwards, he honestly confessed, that he had "unawares

[1] Myles's History.

[2] This had become a matter of grave importance. Matthew Lowes, one of Wesley's most useful itinerants, states, in his unpublished Autobiography, that though the trading of the preachers, in cloth, groceries, hardware, etc., was of considerable benefit to themselves and their families, it was strongly objected to by the people: (1) because it interfered with the businesses of Methodists in the places which the preachers visited; and (2) because it was deemed inconsistent for a minister of the word of God to be engaged in any kind of trade whatever. Lowes' trading was chiefly confined to the sale of a valuable balsam, of which he

1770 Age 67 leaned too much towards Calvinism;"[1] and proceeded to propound doctrines, which, in substance, were the same as those he now embodied in the theses of 1770. Twenty-six years had elapsed since then; but there was a striking resemblance between the two periods; and, substantially, the same cause for outspokenness. To say nothing more concerning Whitefield's doctrines, it is important to bear in mind, that, in 1744, Moravianism, or rather Zinzendorfism, had turned the doctrine of justification by faith only into an antinomian channel; and now, in 1770, the same thing was practically being done by not a few who, at all events, were *called* Methodists. Mr. Fletcher's description of the antinomianism of the period is a frightful picture; and though not so applicable to the followers of Wesley as to those of the Countess of Huntingdon's connexion, yet the former were not so free from the antinomian poison as they should have been. Hence the publication of Wesley's theological theses; substantially the same as he had enunciated in 1744; but not so guardedly expressed. As they led to the longest and bitterest controversy in Wesley's history, we subjoin them in their entirety.

"We said, in 1744, 'We have leaned too much toward Calvinism.' Wherein?

"1. With regard to *man's faithfulness.* Our Lord himself taught us to use the expression; and we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert, on His authority, that, if a man is not 'faithful in the unrighteous mammon,' God will not give *him the true riches.*

himself was the sole maker and vendor; and which, while of great use to the afflicted, and a source of income to the poor itinerant, did not in the least interfere with the business of others; but even Lowes was obliged to give up the itinerancy, when, for the sake of the suffering, and, for the benefit of his numerous family, he refused to give up his balsam. In 1771, he was compelled to retire from the itinerant work, partly for the reason just mentioned, and partly on the ground of health, and, for about a quarter of a century afterwards, acted as a local preacher at Newcastle on Tyne, and supported himself, his wife, and his children, chiefly by the sale of his useful medicine. Three months after his retirement, Wesley wrote to him the following, now for the first time published.

"NORWICH, *November* 10, 1771.

"DEAR MATTHEW,—You should do all you can; otherwise want of exercise will not lessen, but increase your disorder. Certainly there is no objection to your making balsam, while you are not considered as a travelling preacher. I am, with love to sister Lowes, your affectionate brother, "J. WESLEY."

[1] Minutes, 1744.

"2. With regard to *working for life.* This also our Lord has expressly commanded us: 'Labour,' εργαζεσθε, literally 'Work' 'for the meat that endureth to everlasting life.' And, in fact, every believer, till he comes to glory, works for as well as *from* life. 1770 Age 67

"3. We have received it as a maxim, that 'a man is to do nothing in order to justification.' Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God should 'cease from evil, and learn to do well.' Whoever repents should do 'works meet for repentance.' And if this is not *in order* to find favour, what does he do them for?

"Review the whole affair: 1. Who of us is *now* accepted of God? He that now believes in Christ with a loving and obedient heart.

"2. But who among those that never heard of Christ? He that feareth God and worketh righteousness, according to the light he has.

"3. Is this the same with 'he that is sincere'? Nearly, if not quite.

"4. Is not this 'salvation by works'? Not by the *merit* of works, but by works as a *condition.*

"5. What have we been disputing about for these thirty years? I am afraid, *about words.*

"6. As to *merit* itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid; we are rewarded 'according to our works,' yea, 'because of our works.' How does this differ from, *for the sake of our works?* And how differs this from *secundum merita operum?* as our works *deserve?* Can you split this hair? I doubt I cannot.

"7. The grand objection to one of the preceding propositions is drawn from matter of fact. God does in fact justify those, who, by their own confession, neither feared God nor wrought righteousness. Is this an exception to the general rule? It is a doubt, God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure, that the person in question never did fear God and work righteousness? His own saying so is not proof; for we know, how all that are convinced of sin undervalue themselves in every respect.

"8. Does not talking of a justified or a sanctified *state* tend to mislead men? almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, 'according to our works';—according to the whole of our inward tempers, and our outward behaviour."

What was the result of these loosely worded propositions? The answer to this will extend over several years; but suffice it to say at present that the publication gave huge offence to the whole host of Calvinistic Methodists; and Lady Huntingdon declared, that whoever did not wholly disavow the theses should quit her college. Mr. Benson, her classical master, so far from disavowing, defended them, and hence sprung up a correspondence between Wesley and himself, from which the following are extracts.

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"BRISTOL, *October* 5, 1770.

"DEAR JOSEPH,—I am glad you had the courage to speak your mind on so critical an occasion. At all hazards, do so still; only with all possible tenderness and respect. She is much devoted to God, and has a thousand valuable and amiable qualities. There is no great fear that I should be prejudiced against one whom I have intimately known for these thirty years. And I know what is in man; therefore, I make large allowance for human weaknesses. But what you say is exactly the state of the case. They are 'jealous of their authority.' Truly, there is no cause: *Longe mea discrepat illi et vox et ratio.* I fear and shun, not desire, authority of any kind. Only when God lays that burden upon me, I bear it, for His and the people's sake. 'Child,' said my father to me when I was young, 'you think to carry everything by dint of argument; but you will find, by-and-by, how very little is ever done in the world by clear reason.' Very little indeed! Passion and prejudice govern the world; only under the name of reason. It is our part, by religion and reason, to counteract them all we can. It is yours, in particular, to do all that in you lies to soften the prejudices of those that are round about you, and to calm the passions from which they spring. Blessed are the peacemakers! Whatever I say, it will be all one. They will find fault, because I say it. There is implicit envy at my power (so called), and a jealousy rising therefrom. Hence prejudice in a thousand forms; hence objections springing up like mushrooms. And while these causes remain, they will spring up, whatever I can do or say. However, keep thyself pure; and then there need be no strangeness between you and, dear Joseph, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

"LONDON, *November* 30, 1770.

"DEAR JOSEPH,—For several years, I have been convinced that I had not done my duty with regard to that valuable woman; that I had not told her what, I was thoroughly assured, no one else would dare to do, and what I knew she would bear from no other person, but possibly might bear from me. But, being unwilling to give her pain, I put it off from time to time. At length, I did not dare to delay any longer, lest death should call one of us hence. So I, at once, delivered my own soul, by telling her all that was in my heart. It was my business, my proper business, so to do; as none else either could or would do it. Neither did I at all take too much upon me: I know the office of a Christian minister. If she is not profited, it is her own fault, not mine: I have done my duty, and I do not know there is one charge in that letter which was either unjust, unimportant, or aggravated; any more than that against the doggerel hymns, which are equally an insult upon poetry and common sense.

"I am, dear Joseph, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 385. [2] Ibid. p. 387.

The above refers to a letter which Wesley had addressed to Lady Huntingdon; but which has never yet been published. Evidently it was faithful, and also unpalatable. It seems to have strengthened prejudices against him, instead of removing them. His position also was not improved by anti-Calvinian publications over which he had no control. Mr. William Mason, who had been one of Wesley's class-leaders, but had left him, and was now a magistrate of the county of Surrey, and resided at Rotherhithe Wall,[1] issued his "Axe laid to the Root of Antinomian Licentiousness; extracted from the works of Mr. Flavel." 1770: 8vo, 36 pages. Another writer, signing himself "Academicus," gave to the public a small octavo volume of 124 pages, entitled "The Church of England Vindicated from the Rigid Notions of Calvinism"; in which Sir Richard Hill is severely, perhaps abusively, flagellated for his virulent attack on Dr. Adams of Shrewsbury, and the Rev. William Romaine is charged with preaching a sermon which "shocked every serious and rational Christian that heard it." All these incidents had to do with the lamentable anger and bitterness of the memorable Calvinian controversy which will soon demand attention. 1770 Age 67

The sessions of the conference of 1770 being ended, Wesley set out for Cornwall, where he spent the next three weeks. Returning to Bristol, he and his brother, at the beginning of October, agreed, at the request of the society, to administer to them the Lord's supper every other Sunday; which arrangement, of course, rendered it necessary, that an ordained clergyman should reside at Bristol, or in its neighbourhood.

The rest of the year was occupied with his usual journeys to Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, and Kent. Poor Whitefield was dead; and Wesley, if the way was opened, was quite ready to take his place, by including America within the bounds of his vast Methodist circuit. Hence the following to Mrs. Marston, of Worcester.

"*December* 14, 1770.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—If I live till spring, and should have a clear, pressing call, I am as ready to embark for America, as for Ireland. All

[1] "Life and Times of Countess of Huntingdon," vol. i., p. 364.

1770 Age 67 places are alike to me: I am attached to none in particular. Wherever the work of our Lord is to be carried on, *that* is my place for *to-day*. And we live only for to-day: it is not our part to take thought for to-morrow.

"I am, dear Molly, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

On Saturday, September 29, while on his way to Boston, in New England, Whitefield, at the importunity of the people, preached at Exeter, in the open air, a sermon nearly two hours long. At six o'clock next morning he was dead. A friend, addressing him just before he commenced his last sermon, said, "Sir, you are more fit to go to bed than to preach." "True," replied the dying evangelist; and then turning aside, he clasped his hands, and, looking up, said: "Lord Jesus, I am weary *in* Thy work, but not *of* Thy work." Whitefield was buried, where he died, at Newburyport. Every mark of respect was shown to his remains. All the bells in the town tolled, and the ships in the harbour fired mourning guns, and hung their flags half-mast high. In Georgia, all the black cloth in the stores was bought up, and the church was hung with mourning; the governor and council met at the state-house in habiliments of sorrow, and went in procession to hear a funeral sermon.

Whitefield intended to be interred in Tottenham Court chapel, and had told the congregation, that he should like the Wesley brothers to be interred beside him. "We will," said he, "all lie together. You refuse them entrance here while living: they can do you no harm when they are dead."[2] Whitefield's wish was not realised; but, at length, Wesley was admitted to Whitefield's pulpit.

The Rev. Mr. Joss announced in Tottenham Court chapel on November 11, that, on the sabbath following, Wesley would preach a sermon there on Whitefield's death, as it had long ago been agreed between the two, that whichever survived the other should preach the deceased's funeral discourse.[3] An immense multitude assembled. "It was," says Wesley, "an awful season; all were as still as night." On the same

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1826, p. 752.

[2] J. Pawson's manuscripts.

[3] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, Nov. 16, 1770.

day, he preached again in Whitefield's tabernacle in Moorfields. The hour appointed was half-past five; but the place was filled at three, and Wesley began at four. His text was the same at both places: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" Whitefield's characteristics were described as consisting of "unparalelled zeal, indefatigable activity, tender heartedness to the afflicted, and charitableness toward the poor, the most generous friendship, nice and unblemished modesty, frankness and openness of conversation, unflinching courage, and steadiness in whatever he undertook for his Master's sake." Wesley then sketched the doctrines Whitefield preached, and concluded thus. 1770 Age 67

"These are the fundamental doctrines which he everywhere insisted on; and may they not be summed up in two words,—the new birth, and justification by faith? These let us insist upon with all boldness, at all times, and in all places. Keep close to these good, old, unfashionable doctrines, how many soever contradict and blaspheme. Go on, my brethren, in the name of the Lord, and in the power of His might. Let brother no more lift up sword against brother; rather put ye on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, brotherly kindness, gentleness, longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. Let the time past suffice for strife, envy, contention; for biting and devouring one another. O God, with Thee no word is impossible! O that Thou wouldest cause the mantle of Thy prophet, whom Thou hast taken up, now to fall on us that remain! Take away from us all anger and wrath, and bitterness; all clamour and evil speaking! Let Thy Spirit so rest upon us, that from this hour we may be kind to each other, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us!"

Well did such sentiments harmonise with the spirit and the life of Wesley's old and faithful friend; and mournful is the fact, that they were so soon utterly ignored by the party of which Whitefield had been the chief. No sooner was Wesley's sermon preached and published, than it was attacked, because he had omitted to mention the election and final perseverance of the saints. His doctrines of "the new birth and justification by faith were a defective, precarious scheme, and abortive as to saving purposes; because, according to his tenets, a man may be justified by faith, and be born again, and yet never enjoy eternal life, unless he does more for himself, to make

1770 Age 67 his salvation effectual, than has been done for him by the blood and righteousness of Christ."[1]

Whitefield bequeathed his orphan house estate in Georgia, with all its "buildings, lands, and negroes," "to that elect lady, that mother in Israel, that mirror of true and undefiled religion, the Right Honourable Selina, Countess Dowager of Huntingdon." His two chapels in London, with his books and furniture in the Tabernacle house, were left to his "worthy, trusty, tried friends, Messrs. Daniel West and Robert Keen." Within the last three years, he had become possessed, by legacies, of about £1700, including £700 accruing to him at his wife's decease; and this amount he bequeathed to a whole host of friends, the largest share falling to the Countess of Huntingdon; while, in an addendum to his will, he says: "I also leave a mourning ring to my honoured and dear friends and disinterested fellow labourers, the Rev. Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, in token of my indissoluble union with them, in heart and Christian affection, notwithstanding our differences in judgment about some particular points of doctrine. Grace be with all them, of whatever denomination, that love our Lord Jesus, our common Lord, in sincerity."[2]

Thus died one of the greatest Christian orators that ever lived,—a man who, though often heavily afflicted, preached, in four-and-thirty years, upwards of eighteen thousand sermons,[3] many of them in the open air, and often to enormous crowds, and in the teeth of brutal persecution.[4]

Space forbids enlargement; but, perhaps, two unpublished letters, belonging to this period, may be welcome. The first was addressed to Matthew Lowes, and the second to Miss Foard, who afterwards became Mrs. Thornton, of 86, Blackman Street, Southwark.

"LONDON, *October* 13, 1770.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Health you shall have, if health be best; if not, sickness will be a greater blessing. I am glad you have Dr. Wilson

[1] *Gospel Magazine*, 1771, p. 39.
[2] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 1771, pp. 127, 139.
[3] *Gospel Magazine*, 1776, p. 443.
[4] Poor Whitefield was pelted even after he was dead. In the *Annual Register*, for 1770, it is wickedly stated, that his last visit to America was owing "to an attachment to a woman, by whom he had a child while his wife was living;" and it is added, that "this child was the first infant ever entered into his orphan house in Georgia"!

near. A more skilful man, I suppose, is not in England. If you should continue weak, (as I did from November to March,) good is the will of the Lord. You are not a superannuated preacher: but you are a supernumerary. I believe one of your boys is rejoicing in the love of God. 1770 Age 67

"I am, with love to sister Lowes, dear Matthew, your affectionate brother,

"J. WESLEY."

"*December* 29, 1770.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—When we had an opportunity of spending a day or two together, you convinced me that you fear and love God, and desire to enjoy all His promises. And I found you less prejudiced, than I expected, against the doctrine of Christian perfection. I only want you to experience this: to be 'all faith, all gentleness, all love.' Labour to be wise, and yet simple! To steer between the extremes of neglecting to cultivate your understanding, which is right; and *leaning* to it, which is fatally wrong. And be free and open with, my dear Nancy, your affectionate brother,

"J. WESLEY."

Little more, in reference to 1770, remains to be related. To a great extent, mob violence was ended; but Wesley was still the target at which literary malice shot its shafts. The aid of the Muses was again invoked, and some unknown poetaster issued an octavo pamphlet of 39 pages, entitled, "The Perfections of God,—a standing Rule to try all Doctrines and Experience. A Poem humbly offered to the consideration of Mr. John Wesley and his followers." This was evidently the production of one of his Calvinistic friends. Hence the following—

"Shall Wesley sow his hurtful tares,
And scatter round a thousand snares,
Telling how God from wrath may turn,
And love the soul He thought to burn,
And how again His mind may move,
To hate, where He has vowed to love,
How all mankind He fain would save,
Yet longs for what He cannot have,
Industrious thus to sound abroad
A disappointed, changing God?"

Again, in reference to the "Hymn on God's Everlasting Love," we have the following choice *morceau.*

"Blush Wesley, blush, be filled with shame,
Doom thy vile poem to the flame;
What tongue thy horrid crime can tell?
Put saints to sing the song of hell!

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Haste hence to Rome, thy proper place;
Why should we share in thy disgrace?
We need no greater proof to see,
Thy blasphemies with hers agree."

In addition to the above, there was published a sermon of 32 pages, 8vo, entitled "Methodistical Deceit: a Sermon preached in the parish church of St. Matthew, Bethnal Green, by Haddon Smith, curate of the said church."

It is right to say that Mr. Smith's discourse is levelled against the Calvinistic Methodists, of whom, however, he unfortunately speaks as though they were all the Methodists that existed. Remembering the recent origin of the Methodist movement, and the unparalelled opposition it had been its lot to encounter, it is somewhat amusing to find the Bethnal Green curate describing the Methodists as "the *overbearing* sect"; perhaps it was a *lapsus linguæ;* or perhaps the Rev. Mr. Smith began to see, that crushing the system with the iron heel of persecution only diffused its fragrance wider; and that, after all, Methodism, instead of dying, was every year more vigorous than ever. Mr. Smith was severely handled in a pamphlet of 40 pages, with the title, "Letters to the Rev. Mr. Haddon Smith, occasioned by his *Curious* Sermon entitled Methodistical Deceit; by Philalethes."

Wesley's own publications, in 1770, were as follows.

1. "An Extract from Dr. Young's Night Thoughts, on Life, Death, and Immortality." 12mo, 241 pages. Wesley professed to have left out all the lines in Young, which he "apprehended to be either childish, or flat, or turgid, or obscure"; and appended brief explanations of the words and phrases, which he thought would be scarcely understood by unlearned readers.

2. "Minutes of several Conversations between the Rev. Messrs. John and Charles Wesley and others." 8vo, 60 pages. This was a new and enlarged edition of the minutes published in 1763, embracing minutes of all the conferences held from that period to the year 1770.

3. "A Sermon on the Death of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield." 8vo, 32 pages.

4. "Free Thoughts on the Present State of Public Affairs." 8vo, 47 pages. This was published in the midst of the terrible

national confusion, produced by the dissolute and unprincipled anarchist,—the infamous John Wilkes. The pamphlet has been already noticed in a previous chapter.[1] 1770 Age 67

5. It was Wesley's purpose to leave Augustus Toplady in the hands of Walter Sellon. He did this, in one respect, but not in another. For instance, he published a small 12mo tract of eight pages, with the title, "What is an Arminian?" He writes: "To say, 'this man is an Arminian,' has the same effect on many hearers as to say, 'this is a mad dog.' It puts them into a fright at once; they run away from him with all speed and diligence; and will hardly stop, unless it be to throw a stone at the dreadful and mischievous animal." He then proceeds to show, that the differences between an Arminian and a Calvinist may all be reduced to a single sentence, —the Calvinist believes that God has eternally and absolutely decreed to save such and such persons, and no others; that these cannot resist the saving grace that He imparts; and that they cannot finally fall from that grace, which they are not able to resist. An Arminian holds doctrines just the opposite of these. Wesley concludes his tract by advising both Arminian and Calvinist preachers never to use, either in public or private, the word "Calvinist," or "Arminian," as a term of reproach, seeing this was neither better nor worse than calling names,—a practice as inconsistent with good sense and good manners as it is with Christianity itself.

6. Besides this, Wesley issued another tract, entitled, "The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination Stated and Asserted. By the Rev. Mr. A.—— T——." 12mo, 12 pages. This was a faithful abridgment of Toplady's translation of Zanchius, without note or comment, except a short advertisement at the beginning, and a paragraph at the end, both of which we give verbatim.

"Advertisement.—It is granted, that the ensuing tract is, in good measure, a translation. Nevertheless, considering the unparalleled modesty and self diffidence of the young translator, and the tenderness wherewith he treats his opponents, it may well pass for an original."

[1] Wesley's "Free Thoughts" were sharply criticised by an able writer, in 1771, in an octavo pamphlet of 58 pages, with the title of "A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley; in answer to his late pamphlet, entitled 'Free Thoughts on the Present State of Public Affairs.'"

1770 — Age 67. This was stinging; especially when compared with the concluding paragraph—

"The sum of all is this: One in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can. Reader, believe this, or be damned. Witness my hand.

"A—— T——."

This was the whole of Wesley's offending. His tract, we again affirm, was an honest, faithful abridgment of Toplady's pretended translation; but the truth is, by divesting the work of Toplady of its cloudy verbiage, the Calvinistic theory was presented in a form enough to horrify every man of reason and religion. What was the result? Wesley's Abridgment was issued in the month of March, 1770. Poor Toplady seems to have become insane with anger; and, before the same month expired, had completed his answer, which was published forthwith, under the title of "A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley: relative to his pretended Abridgment of Zanchius on Predestination." 8vo, 30 pages. The most charitable excuse for this angry writer is, that he had, in a paroxysm of mortified vanity, lost his balance, and was now *non compos mentis*. Wesley had honestly abridged his work; and had written the two brief paragraphs already quoted. That was all: and, for this, the irate young man of thirty, who in former years had written to Wesley in terms of the most filial respect, now tells him that, "for more than thirty years past he has been endeavouring to palm on his credulous followers his pernicious doctrines, with all the sophistry of a jesuit, and the dictatorial authority of a pope." Wesley is charged with acting "the ignoble part of a lurking, sly assassin." He is exhorted to "renounce the low, serpentine cunning, which puts him on falsifying what he finds himself unable to refute; to dismiss those dirty subterfuges (the last resources of mean, malicious impotence), which degrade the man of parts into a lying sophister, and sink a divine into the level of an oyster woman." Wesley is told, "that it once depended on the toss of a shilling whether he should be a Calvinist or an Arminian. Tails fell uppermost, and he resolved to be an universalist." The elect Toplady continues: "possessed of more than serpentine elability, *you* cast *your* slough, not once a year, but,

almost, once an hour. Hence, your innumerable *inconsistencies,* and flagrant *self contradictions;* the *jarring* of your principles, and the *incoherence* of your religious system. Somewhat like the necromantic soup in the tragedy of 'Macbeth,' your doctrines may be stirred into a chaotic jumble, but witchcraft itself would strive in vain to bring them into coalition." The gentlemanly polemic then informs Wesley, that he shall not hold himself obliged to again enter the lists with him, if he "descends to his customary recourse of false quotations, despicable invective, and unsupported dogmatisms. An opponent," continues this model of polite behaviour, "an opponent, who thinks to add weight to his arguments by scurrility and abuse, resembles the insane person who rolled himself in the mud, in order to make himself fine. I would no more enter into a formal controversy with such a scribbler, than I would contend, for the wall, with a chimney sweeper."

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Is it surprising that, after this, Calvinism was discussed at the conference of 1770; and that, just before it commenced its sittings, Wesley wrote the following unpublished letter to his friend, Mr. Merryweather, at Yarm?

"YORK, *June* 24, 1770.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Mr. Augustus Toplady I know well; but I do not fight with chimney sweepers. He is too dirty a writer for me to meddle with; I should only foul my fingers. I read his title page, and troubled myself no farther. I leave him to Mr. Sellon. He cannot be in better hands.

"As long as you are seeking and expecting to love God with all your heart, so long your soul will live.

"I am your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

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THE year 1771 was one of unceasing conflict. The first two months, as usual, were spent in London, during which Wesley's wife, in one of her insane piques, and without assigning the slightest reason, unceremoniously left his house in London, and started for her own in Pilgrim Street, Newcastle. It was on this occasion that Wesley wrote the words so often quoted: "*Non eam reliqui; non dimisi; non revocabo.*"

On the 3rd of March, Wesley set out for Ireland, where he laboured for the next few months.

Affairs in Scotland were a source of increasing anxiety. Hence the following letter to Lady Maxwell, in reference to Alexander McNab, one of his itinerants, and the Rev. Richard De Courcy, who was about to become minister in Lady Glenorchy's chapel, Edinburgh.

"LONDON, *January* 24, 1771.

"MY DEAR LADY,—Although Mr. McNab is quite clear as to justification by faith, and is, in general, a sound and good preacher, yet, I fear, he is not clear of blame in this. He is too warm and impatient of contradiction, otherwise he must be lost to all common sense, to preach against final perseverance in Scotland. From the first hour that I entered the kingdom, it was a sacred rule with me never to preach on any controverted point,—at least, *not in a controversial way.* Any one may see that this is only to put a sword into our enemies' hands. It is the direct way to increase all their prejudices, and to make all our labours fruitless.

"You will shortly have a trial of another kind. Mr. De Courcy purposes to set out for Edinburgh in a few days. He was from a child a member of our societies in the south of Ireland. There he received remission of sins, and was, for some time, groaning for full redemption. But when he came to Dublin the Philistines were upon him, and soon prevailed over him. Quickly, he was convinced that 'there is no perfection,' and that 'all things depend on *absolute and unchangeable decrees.*' At first, he was exceedingly warm upon these heads; now, he is far more calm. His natural temper, I think, is good; he is open, friendly, and generous. He has also a good understanding, and is not unacquainted with learning, though not deeply versed therein. He has no disagreeable person, a pleasing address, and is a lively as well as sensible preacher. Now, when

you add to this that he is quite new, and very young, you may judge how he will be admired and caressed. How will a raw, inexperienced youth be able to encounter this? If there be not the greatest of miracles to preserve him, will it not turn his brain? And may he not then do far more hurt than either Mr. W—— or Mr. T—— did? Will he not prevent your friend from going on to perfection? Nay, may he not shake you also? At present, indeed, he is in an exceedingly loving spirit. But will that continue long? There will be danger on the one hand if it does; there will be danger on the other if it does not. 1771 Age 68

"It does not appear, that any great change has been wrought in our neighbours by Mr. Whitefield's death. He had fixed the prejudice so deep, that even he himself was not able to remove it; yet, our congregations have increased exceedingly, and the work of God increases on every side. I am glad you use more exercise. It is good for both body and soul. As soon as Mr. De Courcy is come, I shall be glad to hear how the prospect opens. You will then need a larger share of the wisdom from above; and I trust you will write with all openness to, my dear lady, your ever affectionate servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

It was Wesley who obtained Mr. De Courcy's services for Lady Glenorchy. He knew the man, and thought highly of him, but also saw his danger; and hence the warning to Lady Maxwell. It would be a pleasant task to sketch the subsequent career of this devoted Irishman; but, at present, we must confine ourselves to Edinburgh. De Courcy set out for the northern metropolis, as Wesley had said he would; and, immediately on his arrival at Newcastle, addressed to Wesley the following.

"*February* 9, 1771.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—Yesterday evening, after a very tedious journey, the Lord brought me safe to Newcastle. When I reflect on the fatigue and dangers which attend travelling, I should be astonished above measure that you have so indefatigably persevered in all the labours of an itinerant life for so many years, were I not well assured that you have been supernaturally assisted in body and mind for that extensive work to which God has eminently chosen you.

"I write this in Mr. McNab's chamber, with whom, and Mr. Hanby, I find great fellowship of spirit. I have accepted your kind invitation, and purpose taking up my abode with them till Monday, when I set out for Edinburgh. I would stay longer with your dear people here, but that I find Lady Glenorchy is particularly anxious for my speedy arrival in

[1] Lady Maxwell's Life, p. 72.

1771 Age 68 Edinburgh. As my situation there will expose me to diversified trials, do dear sir, pray that I may be kept

'Humble, teachable, and mild,
Patient as a little child,'

"I remain, reverend and dear sir, your most affectionate, but unworthy brother,

"RICHARD DE COURCY."[1]

A few days after De Courcy's arrival, Wesley wrote a second time to Lady Maxwell, as follows.

"*February* 26, 1771.

"MY DEAR LADY,—I cannot but think the chief reason of the little good done by our preachers in Edinburgh is the opposition which has been made by the ministers of Edinburgh, as well as by the false brethren from England. These steeled the hearts of the people against all the good impressions which might otherwise have been made; so that the same preachers, by whom God has constantly wrought, not only in various parts of England, but likewise in the northern parts of Scotland, were in Edinburgh only not useless. They felt a damp upon their spirits; they had not their usual liberty of speech; and the word they spoke seemed to rebound upon them, and not to sink into the hearts of the hearers. At my first coming, I usually find something of this myself; but the second or third time of preaching, it is gone.

"I think it will not be easy for any one to show us, either, that Christ did not die for all, or, that He is not willing as well as able to cleanse from all sin, even in the present world. If your steady adherence to these great truths be termed bigotry, yet you have no need to be ashamed. You are reproached for Christ's sake, and the spirit of glory and of Christ shall rest upon you. Perhaps our Lord may use you to soften some of the harsh spirits, and to preserve Lady Glenorchy, or Mr. De Courcy, from being hurt by them.

"I am, my dear lady, your very affectionate servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

From these letters, it is painfully apparent that the Calvinistic controversy was not confined to England. Edinburgh rang with discordant notes; and, in five months after Mr. De Courcy's coming, Lady Glenorchy dismissed Wesley's preachers from her chapel, assigning, as her reason, that they were not Calvinists.[3]

South of the Tweed there were sounds of the coming battle; hence the following extract from a letter to Miss Bishop.

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1784, p. 388.
[2] Lady Maxwell's Life, p. 22. [3] Ibid.

"*February* 16, 1771. 1771
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"MY DEAR SISTER,— . . . . Legality, with most that use that term, really means tenderness of conscience. There is no propriety in the word, if one would take it for seeking justification by works. Considering, therefore, how hard it is to fix the meaning of that odd term, and how dreadfully it has been abused, I think it highly advisable for all the Methodists to lay it quite aside.

"If Mr. Shirley could find any other doctrine, which he thought was peculiarly mine, he would be as angry at it as he is at Christian perfection. But it is all well: we are to go forward, whoever goes back or turns aside. Perhaps we may see a new accomplishment of Solomon's words, 'He that reproveth a man shall afterward find more favour than he who flattereth with his tongue.' But, be that as it may, I have done my duty: I could no otherwise have delivered my own soul; and no offence at all would have been given thereby, had not pride stifled both religion and generosity. But my letter[1] is now out of date: it is mentioned no more; there is a more plausible occasion found, namely, those eight terrible propositions which conclude the minutes of our conference. At the instance of some who were sadly frightened thereby, I have revised them over and over; I have considered them in every point of view; and truly the more I consider them, the more I like them. The more fully I am convinced, not only that they are true,—agreeable both to Scripture and sound experience,—but, that they contain truths of the deepest importance, and such as ought to be continually inculcated by those who would be pure from the blood of all men.

"Your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Benson had been dismissed from Trevecca, in the month of January, for defending Wesley's minutes; and now Fletcher, the president of the college, informed the Countess of Huntingdon, that, if all Arminians were to be expelled, he must be expelled. This was a serious matter. Fletcher, at Trevecca, had been, according to Benson, "almost an angel in human flesh." "Prayer, praise, love, and zeal were the element in which he lived. His one employment was to call, entreat, and urge others to ascend with him to the glorious Source of being and blessedness. He had leisure comparatively for nothing else. Languages, arts, sciences, grammar, rhetoric, logic, even divinity itself, were all laid aside, when he appeared in the schoolroom among the students. His full heart would not suffer him to be silent; and the students were readier to

[1] Doubtless his letter to Lady Huntingdon.

[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1805, p. 279.

1771 Age 68 hearken to him than to attend to Sallust, Virgil, or Cicero. Soon, they were all in tears; and then he would say, 'As many of you as are athirst for the fulness of the Spirit, follow me into my room.'" Away they trooped after him, and would continue praying, one after another, for hours together, till they could bear to kneel no longer; Fletcher, in the midst, so filled with the love of God, that, more than once, he cried, "O my God, withhold Thy hand, or the vessel will burst!"[1] Such a man in such a place was invaluable; but he was not the man to truckle in the presence of arbitrary power. Hence the following to Wesley.

"MADELEY, *February* 20, 1771.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I fear we are going, or are already gone, from our plan of catholicism at the college. Mr. Benson's affair has made me tell my mind to our Deborah, about bigotry, partiality, prejudice, and everything that seemed to me contrary to the Christian spirit in some late transactions. The answer was, that if one half of the things objected to by me was true, there would be room for the cruelty of my charges; but facts and words have been grossly misrepresented. Therefore, my mouth is shut so far.

"This, however, I have insisted, and do insist, upon, if every Arminian must quit the college, I am discharged for one; for I cannot give up the possibility of the salvation of all any more than I can give up the truth and love of God.

"Secondly, I will be no party man, nor give up my connections with any that fear God, much less with Mr. Wesley, who shall be always welcome to my pulpit, and I make no doubt will welcome me to his.

"Thirdly, nobody shall prevent my following after an entire devotedness of heart to God, by baiting my Christian hopes and privileges under the name of perfection.

"To this, I have received no particular answer; but, as I set out for the college to-day, I may get one *viva voce*.

"Though no letter writer, I am and shall always remain, reverend and dear sir, your ready though unprofitable servant,

"JOHN FLETCHER."[2]

The result of Fletcher's visit to the college is given in the subjoined extracts from letters sent to Benson.

"*March* 22, 1771.

"On my arrival at the college, I found all very quiet, I fear, through the enemy's keeping his goods in peace. While I preached, I found myself as much shackled as ever I was in my life; and, after private

[1] Wesley's Life of Fletcher. [2] Manuscript letter.

prayer, I concluded I was not in my place. The same day I resigned my office to my lady, and on Wednesday to the students and the Lord. Last Friday I left them all in peace, the servant, but no more the president, of the college."[1] 1771 Age 68

"Mr. Shirley has sent my lady a copy of part of the minutes of the last conference, namely, of the year 1770. They were called *horrible* and *abominable*. My lady told me, *she must turn against them; and that whoever did not fully disavow them must quit the college.* She accordingly ordered the master and all the students to write their sentiments upon them without reserve. I did so; explained them according to Mr. Wesley's sentiments; and approved the doctrine, though not cautiously worded. I concluded by observing, that, as after such a step on my part, and such a declaration on my lady's, I could no longer, as an honest man, stay in the college, I took my leave of it; wishing my lady might find a minister to preside over it less insufficient than

"JOHN FLETCHER."[2]

So much respecting Trevecca. Returning to Wesley, we find him defending himself in the following long letter, published in *Lloyd's Evening Post* for March 1, 1771.

"*February* 26, 1771.

"SIR,—The editor of a monthly publication, pompously called *The Gospel Magazine*, has violently fallen upon one and another, who did not knowingly give him any provocation. And whereas, in other magazines, the accused has liberty to answer for himself, it is not so here. This gentleman will publish only the charge; but not the defence. What can a person, thus injuriously treated, do? To publish pamphlets, on every head, would not answer the end, for the answer would not come into near so many hands as the objection. Is there then a better way than to appeal to candid men, in one of the public papers, by which means the antidote will operate both as widely and as speedily as the poison? This method, therefore, I take at last, after delaying as long as I could with innocence.

"In that magazine for last month, there is a warm attack upon my sermon on the death of Mr. Whitefield. The first charge is against the text, 'Let me die the death of the righteous.' 'How improper,' says Mr. R.,[3] 'to apply the words of a mad prophet to so holy a man as Mr. Whitefield.'

"Improper! See how doctors differ! I conceive nothing can possibly be more proper. If Mr. R. did indeed tell his congregation, some of whom disliked his attacking my poor text before, 'Let who will be vexed, I do not care; I will not justify Balaam while I live'; yet, others imagine nothing would be more suitable than for Balaam junior to use

[1] Benson's Life, by Treffry.
[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xi., p. 285.
[3] Probably Mr. Romaine.

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the words of his forefather; especially, as he did not apply them to Mr. Whitefield, but to himself. Surely a poor reprobate may, without offence, *wish* to die like one of the elect! And I dare say, every one understood me to mean this, the moment he heard the text. If not, the very hymn I sung showed to whom I applied the words—

'Oh that, without a lingering groan,
I might the welcome word receive!
My body with my charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live!'

"But the main attack is on the sermon itself; in which I am charged with asserting a gross falsehood, in the face of God and the congregation, and that knowing it to be such, namely, that 'the grand fundamental doctrines which Mr. Whitefield everywhere preached, were those of the new birth and justification by faith.' No, says Mr. R., not at all: the grand fundamental doctrines, which he everywhere preached, were the everlasting covenant between the Father and the Son, and absolute predestination flowing therefrom.

"I join issue on this head. Whether the doctrines of the eternal covenant, and of absolute predestination, are the grand fundamental doctrines of Christianity, or not, I affirm again—(1) that Mr. Whitefield did not everywhere preach these; (2) that he did everywhere preach the new birth, and justification by faith.

"1. He did not everywhere preach the eternal covenant, and absolute predestination. In all the times I myself heard him preach, I never heard him utter a sentence either on one or the other. Yea, all the times he preached in West Street chapel, and in our other chapels throughout England, he did not preach these doctrines at all, no, not in a single paragraph; which, by the bye, is a demonstration that he did not think them the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

"2. Both in West Street chapel, and all our other chapels throughout England, he did preach the necessity of the new birth, and justification by faith, as clearly as he has done in his two volumes of printed sermons. Therefore, all that I have asserted is true, and provable by ten thousand witnesses.

"Nay, says Mr. R., 'Mr. Whitefield everywhere insisted on other fundamental doctrines, from the foundation of which the new birth and justification by faith take their rise, and with which they are inseparably connected. These are the everlasting covenant, which was entered into by the Holy Trinity, and God the Father's everlasting, unchangeable election of sinners' (in virtue of which a fiftieth part of mankind shall be saved, do what they will; and the other forty-nine parts shall be damned, do what they can). 'These doctrines are not of a less essential nature than either regeneration or justification. No, by no means; they are to the full equally essential to the glory of God. Yea, there is an inseparable connection between them. This is *a most essential, a most fundamental point.*' (*Magazine*, p. 41.)

"If so, then every one who does not hold it must perish everlastingly.

If, as you here assert, he cannot be justified, then he cannot be saved. If, as you say, he cannot be born again, *he cannot see the kingdom of God.* 1771 Age 68

"After asserting this, can Mr. R. ever take the name of *catholic love* into his mouth? Is not this the very opposite to it? the height and depth of *bigotry?* Does this spirit do honour to his opinion? Can we conceive anything more horrid? Is it not enough to make a person of humanity shudder? Yea, to make his blood run cold?

"I do not here enter into the merits of the cause. I need not. It is done to my hands. The whole doctrine of predestination is thoroughly discussed in those three tracts lately printed: 'An Answer to the Eleven Letters commonly ascribed to Mr. Hervey'; 'Arguments against General Redemption Considered'; and 'An Answer to Elisha Coles.' Till these are seriously and solidly refuted, I have no more to say on that head. But I must aver, that the excluding all from salvation who do not believe the horrible decree is a most shocking insult on all mankind, on common sense, and common humanity.

"I am, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Of course, this was too pungent to pass without notice. Accordingly, in the *Gospel Magazine* for the month following, there appeared an incisive review of Sellon's Answer to Elisha Coles, which is described as "a mite of reprobate silver, cast into the *Foundery*, and coming out thence, with the impress of that pride, self righteousness, and self sufficiency, natural to men in their fallen, unrenewed state." Sellon is accused of "trifling effrontery," and is said "to have sunk far below the gentleman, and to have lost all appearance of the Christian"; and is further designated "the Cardinal Bellarmine of the day; the obsequious servant and faithful labourer to his holiness."

In a subsequent number of the same periodical, published in the month of May, Wesley's minutes are attacked; the writer, "A Real Protestant," indignantly asking, "Are not these the very doctrines of popery, yea, of popery unmasked? Is it not awful that 29,406 souls, who are in Mr. Wesley's societies, should be so dreadfully seduced from the protestant doctrines, and deluded into a belief of the doctrines of the mother of harlots, the whore of Babylon, the Church of Rome?"

Thus the bitter controversy proceeded. Comment would be easy; but we prefer to let the chief actors speak; and, not to interrupt this painful scene, proceed to give other letters

1771 Age 68 bearing upon the subject, so that the reader may have before him as full a view of the spirit and behaviour of both parties as it is possible to furnish.

While on his way to Ireland, Wesley wrote the following to Fletcher.

"I always did, for between these thirty and forty years, clearly assert the total fall of man, and his utter inability to do any good of himself; the absolute necessity of the grace and Spirit of God to raise even a good thought or desire in our hearts; the Lord's rewarding no work, and accepting of none, but so far as they proceed from His preventing, convincing, and converting grace through the Beloved; the blood and righteousness of Christ being the sole meritorious cause of our salvation. Who is there in England, that has asserted these things more strongly and steadily than I have done?" [1]

The next letter, addressed to Lady Huntingdon, was occasioned by one which her ladyship had sent to Wesley's brother on the subject of his minutes,[2] and was dated "Bath, June 8, 1771." The countess brands the minutes as "popery unmasked"; and declares that "all ought to be deemed papists who do not disown them." She thus concludes: "as you have no part in this matter, I find it difficult to blame your brother to you; while as an honest man I must pity you, as you must suffer equal disgrace, and universal distrust, from the supposed union with him." Charles Wesley endorsed this unworthy letter with the words: "Lady Huntingdon's last; unanswered by John Wesley's brother." [3]

Charles Wesley doubtless communicated the contents to his brother, who was now in Ireland; in fact, her ladyship requested him to do this: and hence the following.

"*June* 19, 1771.

"MY DEAR LADY,—Many years since, I saw that 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' I began following after it, and inciting all with whom I had any intercourse to do the same. Ten years after, God gave me a clearer view than I had before of the way how to attain this, namely, by faith in the Son of God; and, immediately, I declared to all, 'We are saved from sin, we are made holy, by faith.' This I testified in private, in public, in print; and God confirmed it by a thousand witnesses. I have continued to declare this, for above thirty years; and God has con-

[1] Fletcher's Vindication, 1st Edit., p. 21.
[2] "Life and Times of Countess of Huntingdon," vol. ii., p. 240.
[3] Jackson's Life of C. Wesley, vol. ii., p. 256.

tinued to confirm the word of His grace. But, during this time, well-nigh all the religious world have set themselves in array against me, and, among the rest, many of my own children, following the example of one of my eldest sons, Mr. Whitefield. Their general cry has been, 'He is unsound in the faith; he preaches another gospel!' I answer, Whether it be the same which they preach or not, it is the same which I have preached for above thirty years. This may easily appear from what I have published during that whole term. I instance only in three sermons; that on 'Salvation by Faith,' printed in the year 1738; that on 'The Lord our Righteousness,' printed a few years since; and that on Mr. Whitefield's funeral, printed only some months ago. 1771 Age 68

"But it is said, 'Oh but you printed ten lines in August last, which contradict all your other writings.' Be not so sure of this. It is probable, at least, that I understand my own meaning as well as you do; and that meaning I have yet again declared in the sermon last referred to. By that, interpret those ten lines, and you will understand them better; although I should think that any one might see, even without this help, that the lines in question do not refer to the condition of obtaining, but of continuing in the favour of God. But whether the sentiment contained in these lines be right or wrong, and whether it be well or ill expressed, the gospel which I now preach God does still confirm by new witnesses in every place; perhaps never so much in this kingdom as within these last three months. Now, I argue from glaring, undeniable fact: God cannot bear witness to a lie; the gospel, therefore, which He confirms must be true in substance. There may be opinions maintained at the same time which are not exactly true; and who can be secure from these? Perhaps, I thought myself so once. When I was much younger than I am now, I thought myself almost infallible; but, I bless God, I know myself better now.

"To be short. Such as I am, I love you well. You have one of the first places in my esteem and affection; and you once had some regard for me. But it cannot continue if it depends upon my seeing with your eyes, or on my being in no mistake. What if I was in as many as Mr. Law himself? If you were, I should love you still, provided your heart was still right with God. My dear friend, you seem not to have well learned yet the meaning of those words, which I desire to have continually written upon my heart, 'Whosoever doth the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.'

"I am, my dear lady, your affectionate

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Contemporaneously with the above letter, the Rev. Walter Shirley and Lady Huntingdon sent the following circular to Wesley, as well as to a large number of their Calvinian friends.

"SIR,—Whereas Mr. Wesley's conference is to be held at Bristol, on Tuesday, the 6th of August next, it is proposed, by Lady Huntingdon, and

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1797, p. 563.

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many other Christian friends, (real protestants,) to have a meeting at Bristol at the same time, of such principal persons, both clergy and laity, who disapprove of the underwritten minutes[1]; and as the same are thought injurious to the very *fundamental*[2] principles of Christianity, it is further proposed, that they go in a body to the said conference, and insist upon a formal recantation of the said minutes; and, in case of a refusal, that they sign and publish their protest against them. Your presence, sir, on this occasion is particularly requested; but, if it should not suit your convenience to be there, it is desired that you will transmit your sentiments on the subject to such person as you think proper to produce them. It is submitted to you, whether it would not be right, in the opposition to be made to such a *dreadful heresy*,[2] to recommend it to as many of your Christian friends, as well of the Dissenters as of the Established Church, as you can prevail on to be there, the cause being of so public a nature.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"WALTER SHIRLEY.

"P.S.—Your answer is desired, directed to the Countess of Huntingdon; or the Rev. Mr. Shirley; or John Lloyd, Esq., in Bath; or Mr. James Ireland, merchant, Bristol; or to Thomas Powis, Esq., at Berwick, near Shrewsbury; or to Richard Hill, Esq., at Hawkstone, near Whitchurch, Shropshire. Lodgings will be provided. Inquire at Mr. Ireland's, Bristol."

A fine confederacy of elected saints, armed with self invested papal power to *insist* upon the recantation of poor Wesley and his heretical preachers!

The modest and self diffident countess and her executive chaplain apologise for this high handed interference on the ground that they "were warmly interested in the revival of *spiritual* religion and the doctrines of the *Reformation;*" that they "apprehended that the doctrines contained in the minutes had the most fatal tendency; and, in the strongest and most explicit terms, maintained *salvation by works*"; and that Wesley was not an ordinary personage, but stood "at the head of near thirty thousand people,—a veteran in the cause of the gospel,—one of the chiefs in the late reformation."[3]

One would have thought that, at least, the last mentioned reason would have led them to adopt a less offensive and more respectful method of correcting his "dreadful heresy," than that of marching upon him and his conference *en masse;* and

[1] The minutes of the conference of 1770.
[2] The *italic* words are emphasized in the original.
[3] Shirley's "Narrative," p. 5.

imperiously *insisting* upon his recantation. Surely, it would not have been too great a condescension for them and their friends, first of all, to have respectfully solicited of such "a veteran and chief" an explanation of what he meant; and, if they still found him to be in error, to ask for an opportunity to reason the matter with him and to set him right. But, no; this was far too troublesome for the elect of God, who, of course, were right, and all others wrong; and, hence, the only action, which would not impinge upon their sacred dignity, was to march, in solemn phalanx, to the assembly of Wesley and his poor itinerants, and there "*insist upon a formal recantation*"; and then, in case the heretics should refuse to yield, and because the valiant defenders of the truth were without power to imprison, to banish, or to burn, it was piously proposed that, for want of something more effectual, they should content themselves with a *public protest* against the pestilential minutes. 1771 Age 68

One of Shirley's circulars was handed to Fletcher, the ex-president of Trevecca, who wrote to Wesley the following letter, hitherto unpublished.

"MADELEY, *June* 24, 1771.

"DEAR SIR,—When I left Wales, where I had stood in the gap for peace, I thought my poor endeavours were not altogether vain. Lady Huntingdon said she would write civilly to you, and desire you to explain yourself about your minutes. I suppose you have not heard from her, for she wrote me word since that she believed she must not meddle in the affair. At least, that is what I made of her letter. Upon receiving yours from Chester, I cut off that part of it where you expressed your belief of what is eminently called by us the doctrine of free grace; and sent it to the college, with a desire it might be sent to Lady Huntingdon. She has returned it to me, with a letter, in which she expresses the greatest disapprobation of it. The purport of her letter is, to charge you with tergiversation, and me with being the dupe of your impositions. She has also wrote in stronger terms to her college.

"Things, I hoped, would have remained there; but how am I surprised and grieved to see zeal borrowing the horn of discord, and sounding an alarm throughout the religious world against you. Mr. Hutton called upon me last night, and showed me a printed circular, which I suppose is, or will be, sent to the serious clergy and laity throughout the land. I have received none, as I have lost, I suppose, my reputation of being a '*real protestant*,' by what I wrote upon your minutes in Wales.

"This is an exact copy of the printed letter.

[Here follows Shirley's circular as above.]

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"I think it my duty, dear sir, to give you the earliest intelligence of this bold onset, and to assure you that upon the evangelical principles, mentioned in your last letter to me, I, for one, shall be glad to stand by you and your doctrine to the last, hoping that you will gladly remove stumbling blocks out of the way of the weak, and alter such expressions as may create prejudice in the hearts of those who are inclined to admit it.

"I write to Mr. Shirley to expostulate with him, and to request him to call in his circular letter. He is the last man that should attack you. His sermons contain propositions much more heretical and anti-Calvinistical than your minutes. If my letters have not the desired effect, I shall probably, if you approve of them and correct them, make them public for your justification.

"I find Mr. Ireland is to write to make you *tamely recant* without measuring swords, or breaking a pike with our *real protestants*. I wrote to him also.

"I am, dear sir, your unworthy servant in the gospel,

"JOHN FLETCHER.

"To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, at his Preaching House in Dublin, Ireland."

There was chivalry in this,—the real, genuine chivalry of a noble mind and generous heart. The Swiss mountaineer was not the man to see a friend *bullied* without rushing to his rescue.

Wesley was not without sympathy. A few days later, his faithful friend, Vincent Perronet, the vicar of Shoreham, who was also of Swiss extraction, wrote to him as follows.

"SHOREHAM, *July* 9, 1771.

"MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,—I am truly concerned, that so laborious a servant of Christ should be attacked in so violent a manner. Insulted by some, without the least decency, or regard to common decorum; and threatened by others with a synodical sentence.

"Had I been honoured with an invitation from a great personage, for whom I have a very high esteem, I should have told her ladyship, that I have no greater veneration for synods than the most excellent Bishop Nazianzen had formerly, whose great learning and Christian virtues could not screen him from the usual violence of those assemblies, and who therefore desired to see no more of them.

"However, with regard to the *merit* of good works, I should frankly have declared my abhorrence of the very sound of the word; since I could not conceive how an unprofitable servant could merit anything from a holy God. But then, on the other hand, I should have added, that whoever should speak contemptuously of the diligent exercise of good works, as if they derogated from the honour of Christ, I should tell such a divine, that, whether he found his divinity either in Luther, or Calvin, or the Synod of Dort, it was no divinity of the gospel of Christ; since

Christ came to purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. And as the Holy Spirit has assured us, over and over, that 'we shall be judged according to our works,' it is, therefore, no wonder that St. Paul should pray that his converts might be 'established in every good word and work.' Besides, I might have observed that the zealot who decries good works was acting a most ridiculous part with regard to faith; for if his faith did not bring forth good works, his faith was good for nothing. 1771 Age 68

"However, though such good works were the fruits of faith, and consequently the fruit of the Spirit of Christ, and, for that reason, must be acceptable to God, yet, I must have added, so far as they were our works, so far they wanted the blood of Christ to wash away their defilements, and to atone for their deficiencies; and, therefore, even our best works can have no merit in them.

"I should, then, have remonstrated to that worthy lady to the following purpose,—that if one, who had laboured in the vineyard, I believed, full as much as any person since the days of the apostles, was not thought worthy of the mantle of love, for any mistake he might have made, yet surely he had a right to expect, that notice would have been given him to explain his meaning, before his judge pronounced sentence. This is a privilege granted to every supposed criminal in our courts of law, and where this is denied that court is no better than a court of inquisition.

"But now, my dear brother, what effect such a letter might have had, I pretend not to say. It would, at the least, have testified to that friendship, which I have constantly had for you these twenty-five years. May God direct us both, and may our worst enemies be all brought to Him! You have my leave to make what use you please of this long letter.

"I am, my very dear brother, yours most affectionately,

"VINCENT PERRONET."[1]

Just at this juncture, Wesley drew up and printed, at Dublin, under date "July 10, 1771," a clear and logical exposition of the doctrines set forth in the minutes, which he doubtless circulated among his preachers and friends. At the top of the first page of one of the copies, he requested Miss Bishop, of Bath, not to "show it before conference," adding, "if the Calvinists do not, or will not understand me, I understand myself; and I do not contradict anything I have written these thirty years. Poor Mr. Shirley's triumph will be short."[2]

Wesley's views were the same as Perronet's. What were Charles Wesley's, and what part was taken by him in this

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1797, p. 253.
[2] Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i., p. 394.

1771 momentous controversy? The biographer of the Countess of
Age 68 Huntingdon would have his readers to believe, that Charles disapproved of his brother's letter to her ladyship; that he would reprove him for it; and, that he preferred peace above all things.[1] It might be so; we have no means of gainsaying it. It is doubtful whether he attended the conference in Bristol; in fact, almost certain that he did not. Hence the following, addressed to him only three days before the commencement of its sittings.

"KINGSWOOD, *August* 3, 1771.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I will not throw away Thomas Rankin on the people of London. He shall go where they know the value of him.

"We cannot put out what we never put in. I do not use the word 'merit.' I never did, neither do I now, contend for the use of it. But I ask you, or any other, a plain question: and do not cry, Murder; but give me an answer. What is the difference between '*mereri*,' and 'to deserve'? or between 'deserving,' and '*meritum*'? I say still, I cannot tell. Can you? Can Mr. Shirley, or any man living? In asking this question, I neither plead for merit, nor against it. I have nothing to do with it. I have declared a thousand times, there is no goodness in man till he is justified; no merit, either before or after; that is, taking the word in its proper sense: for in a loose sense 'meritorious' means no more than 'rewardable.'

"As to reprobation, seeing they have drawn the sword, I throw away the scabbard. I send you a specimen. Let fifteen hundred of them be printed as soon as you please.[2]

"Nothing was ever yet expended out of the yearly collection, without being immediately set down by the secretary. I never took a shilling from that fund yet.

"What you advise with regard to our behaviour toward our opposers exactly agrees with my sentiments. I am full of business, as you may suppose. So adieu!

"JOHN WESLEY."[3]

On the evening before Wesley's conference assembled, two letters were put into his hand, one written by Lady Huntingdon, the other by the Rev. Walter Shirley. The purport of her ladyship's letter was, that, having learned that the proposed method of visiting his conference appeared to him and to his friends "as an arbitrary way of proceeding, she and her allies wished to inform him, that they intended no per-

[1] "Life and Times of Countess of Huntingdon," vol. ii., p. 237.
[2] This was probably "The Consequence Proved," to be noticed shortly.
[3] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 127.

sonal disrespect, but a degree of zeal against the principles established in the minutes, which were repugnant to the whole plan of man's salvation under the new covenant of grace, and also to the clear meaning of the Established Church, as well as to all other protestant churches, to whose foundations the highest honour and respect are due." [1] 1771 Age 68

Shirley's letter apologises for that part of his circular which seemed to assume, that he and his friends had a "civil right to go in a body to Wesley's conference, and insist on a formal recantation of the minutes." All he meant was, to send Wesley a "respectful message importing their design, and requesting him to appoint a day and hour for the conference to receive them." The reason why he had inserted "the offensive expression, 'insist upon a formal recantation,'" (for which he now apologised,) was, because "it was supposed by some, that, instead of giving satisfaction on the points in question, such a forced construction would be put on the meaning of the minutes, as might elude the intended opposition, and yet leave the doctrines therein contained entire and unrepealed." Shirley concludes by stating, that the doctrines of the minutes appear to him "evidently subversive of the *fundamentals* of Christianity." [2]

Remembering that Wesley was not under the slightest obligation to either the Countess of Huntingdon, Mr. Shirley, or any of their Calvinistic friends, he might, without any want of courtesy, have treated with contempt a letter casting upon him the slur of trickishness, and have declined to see its author; but, instead of that, he appointed Thursday, August 8, for the momentous interview. Accordingly, on that day, Shirley, and two other ministers of the Countess of Huntingdon's chapels, together with Messrs. Lloyd, Ireland, and Winter, and two students (!) from Trevecca college, went to Wesley's conference. Shirley's circular, summoning a synod, had been sent to all his sympathisers, clerical and laical, throughout the three kingdoms; and the result was a grand convocation of less than half a score, and even these included two laics belonging to Bath and Bristol, and at least two young men, still merely preparing for the ministry. The

[1] Shirley's "Narrative," p. 8. [2] Ibid. p. 10.

1771 Age 68 thing was a ridiculous failure; but not even on that account did Wesley refuse to see the self elected deputies. First of all, Wesley engaged in prayer. Then Shirley desired to know if the letters of himself and Lady Huntingdon had been read to the conference. Being answered in the negative, he asked leave to read them, which was granted. A lengthened conversation followed; and then Shirley produced a written declaration which he wished the conference to sign. Wesley read it, and made some alterations, which Shirley says were "not very material," and then he and fifty-three of his preachers appended to it their signatures.[1] The declaration thus signed was as follows:—

"Whereas the doctrinal points in the Minutes of a Conference, held in London, August 7, 1770, have been understood to favour Justification by Works: now the Rev. John Wesley, and others assembled in Conference, do declare, that we had no such meaning; and that we abhor the doctrine of Justification by Works as a most perilous and abominable doctrine; and as the said Minutes are not sufficiently guarded in the way they are expressed, we hereby solemnly declare, in the sight of God, that we have no trust or confidence but in the alone merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for Justification or Salvation either in life, death or the day of judgment; and though no one is a real Christian believer, (and consequently cannot be saved) who doth not good works, where there is time and opportunity, yet our works have no part in meriting or purchasing our salvation[2] from first to last, either in whole or in part."

After the declaration had been agreed to, Shirley was requested "to make some public acknowledgment, that he had mistaken the meaning of the minutes." Shirley hesitated, but at last consented, and wrote a certificate to that effect.

In the meantime, Wesley had received from Fletcher the manuscript copy of his "Vindication of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Last Minutes: occasioned by a circular, printed letter, inviting principal persons, both clergy and laity, as well of the Dissenters as of the Established Church, who disapprove of

[1] Charles Wesley's name is not in the list: a further proof that, strangely enough, he was not at this most important conference.

[2] This is the word in Shirley's "Narrative"; but in the *Gospel Magazine* for August, 1771, the word "justification" is used instead; and there can be little doubt, that this was the reading of the original declaration. The difference at first seems slight, but, in reality, it is of great importance, as the readers of Fletcher's "Checks" will easily perceive.

those Minutes, to oppose them in a body, as a dreadful heresy: in Five Letters to the Hon. and Rev. Author of the circular letter." 1771 Age 68

Wesley at once gave the manuscript to William Pine to print and publish. Shirley, hearing of this, waited upon Wesley the day after he and his friends had been to conference, and requested that the manuscript should not be printed, urging as their reason, that Fletcher himself wished for this, "if matters should end peaceably." Wesley, however, persisted, and the work was published without delay, in a 12mo pamphlet of 98 pages. Whilst the manuscript was being printed, Wesley took the opportunity to reply to the letter of Lady Huntingdon, which had been put into his hands the night before his conference commenced. Nine days had elapsed since then, and now Wesley, on August 14, addresses her ladyship in the following unflinching terms, his letter also showing that the publication of Fletcher's "Vindication" was no after thought, but was proceeding even while the conference was sitting.

"MY DEAR LADY,—The principles established in the minutes I apprehend to be no way contrary to that great truth, justification by faith, or that consistent plan of doctrine, which was once delivered to the saints. I believe whoever calmly considers Mr. Fletcher's Letters will be convinced of this. I fear, therefore, that 'zeal against those principles' is no less than zeal against the truth, and against the *honour* of our Lord. The preservation of *His* honour appears so sacred to me, and has done for above these forty years, that I have counted, and do count, all things loss in comparison of it. But till Mr. Fletcher's Letters are answered, I must think everything spoken against these *minutes* is totally destructive of *His honour*, and a palpable affront to Him; both as our Prophet and Priest, but more especially as the King of His people. Those Letters, therefore, which could not be suppressed without betraying the honour of our Lord, largely prove that the *minutes* lay no other foundation than that which is laid in Scripture, and which I have been laying, and teaching others to lay, for between thirty and forty years. Indeed, it would be amazing that God should at this day prosper my labours as much if not more than ever, by convincing as well as converting sinners, if I was establishing another foundation, repugnant to the whole plan of man's 'salvation under the covenant of grace, as well as the clear meaning of our *Established* Church, and all other *protestant* churches.' This is a charge indeed! But I plead not guilty: and till it is proved upon me, I must subscribe myself, my dear lady, your ladyship's affectionate but much injured servant, "JOHN WESLEY."[1]

[1] Whitehead's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 349.

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Wesley had told his brother, that as "they had drawn the sword," he himself should "throw away the scabbard," and now this was done. Shirley found the tables turned, and, instead of attacking others, had to defend himself; and hence, in September, he issued his "Narrative of the Principal Circumstances relative to the Rev. Mr. Wesley's late Conference, held in Bristol, August 6, 1771." 8vo, 24 pages.

Space prohibits any lengthened outline of Fletcher's "Vindication." He gives (1) a general view of Wesley's doctrine; (2) an account of the commendable design of his minutes; (3) a vindication of their propositions. It is in this production, that he furnishes his fearful description of the antinomianism which was then so prevalent, and which really rendered some utterance on the subject of good works a solemn necessity. He also makes extracts from Shirley's published sermons, teaching the very doctrines which Wesley's minutes teach; to which quotations Shirley's reply was, that "they were wrote many years ago when he had more zeal than light," and that he had "frequently wished that they were burnt."[1]

Fletcher concludes thus:—

"O sir, have we not fightings enough without, to employ all our time and strength? Must we also declare war and promote fightings within? Must we catch at every opportunity to stab one another? What can be more cutting to an old minister of Christ than to be traduced as a dreadful heretic, in printed letters sent to the best men of the land, through all England and Scotland, and signed by a person of your rank and piety? While he is gone to a neighbouring kingdom, to preach Jesus Christ, to have his friends prejudiced, his foes elevated; and the fruit of his extensive ministry at the point of being blasted? Of the two greatest and most useful ministers I ever knew, one is no more. The other, after amazing labours, flies still, with unwearied diligence, through the three kingdoms, calling sinners to repentance. Though oppressed with the weight of near seventy years, and the cares of near thirty thousand souls, he shames still, by his unabated zeal and immense labours, all the young ministers in England, perhaps in Christendom. He has generally blown the gospel trumpet, and rode twenty miles, before most of the professors, who despise his labours, have left their downy pillows. As he begins the day, the week, the year, so he concludes them, still intent upon extensive services for the glory of the Redeemer, and the good of souls. And shall we lightly lift up our pens, our tongues, our hands against him? No; let them rather forget their cunning. If we *will*

[1] Shirley's "Narrative."

quarrel, can we find nobody to fall out with, but the minister upon whom God puts the greatest honour?" 1771 Age 68

Shirley's "Narrative" was published in September, in which he gives great prominence to one of Fletcher's letters requesting his "Vindication" to be suppressed. He furnishes an extract from one addressed to Mr. Ireland, dated August 15, to the following effect: "I feel for poor dear Mr. Shirley, whom I have, (considering the present circumstances,) treated too severely in my vindication of the minutes. My dear sir, what must be done? I am ready to defray, by selling to my last shirt, the expense of the printing of my Vindication, and suppress it."

This was characteristic of Fletcher's large heartedness; but the extract from his letter was a garbled one, and rendered it necessary that he should again enter the field of battle, and defend himself as well as others. This was done at once, and, before the year was ended, another production of his facile pen was published, namely, "A Second Check to Antinomianism: occasioned by a late narrative, in three letters, to the Hon. and Rev. Author. By the Vindicator of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Minutes." 12mo, 109 pages.

He tells Shirley, that, though it was perfectly true that he had written to Mr. Ireland, requesting his letters to be suppressed, he had also stated to the same gentleman, that "the minutes *must* be vindicated,—that Mr. Wesley owed this to the Church, to the 'real protestants,' to all his societies, and to his own aspersed character." He states: "I was going to preach when I had the news of your happy accommodation, and was no sooner out of church, than I wrote to beg my Vindication might not appear in the dress in which I had put it. I did not then, nor do I yet, repent having written upon the minutes; but, as matters are now, I am very sorry I did not write in a general manner, without taking notice of the circular letter, and mentioning your dear name."[1] He adds, that when he gave the manuscript to Wesley, he begged him to correct it, and to expunge whatever might be "unkind or too sharp." Wesley had assured him, that "he *had* expunged every tart expression"; and, if so, (for Fletcher had not yet seen it in a

[1] "Second Check," 1st Edit., p. 40.

1771 printed form,) he was "*reconciled* to its publication." Fletcher
Age 68 further adds, that he had just received a letter (September 11, 1771) from Bristol, stating that when Thomas Olivers, who was now acting as Wesley's editor, heard of Fletcher's wish to suppress his "Vindication," he had already announced to the Bristol congregation, that the work was in the press, and would soon be ready. "Besides," continues Fletcher, in reference to Thomas Olivers being the only preacher who refused to sign the declaration at the conference,—"Besides, Mr. Olivers would have pleaded, with smartness, that he never approved of a patched up peace,—that he bore his testimony against it at the time it was made,—had a personal right to produce *my* arguments, since both parties refused to hear *his* at the conference."

These facts are of great consequence, inasmuch as Shirley magnifies Wesley's publication of Fletcher's Vindication into a heinous fault; and others after him have endeavoured to brand Wesley's character, not only for perpetuating the war, but for publishing Fletcher's manuscript contrary to Fletcher's wish. This is utterly unjust. The war was begun, not by Wesley, but by the Calvinists; and surely the attacked was not presumptuous, or wanton, in endeavouring to defend himself. It is true, that, in doing that, he uses the sword of his friend Fletcher; but what of that? The sword was given him to use, on July 27, when on his return from Ireland; and, though Fletcher subsequently hesitated as to the propriety of the step he had taken, it was not until the sword was brandished, by Fletcher's manuscript being committed to the press and actually announced for sale. Besides, Fletcher's hesitancy had reference, not to the thing done, but to the manner of its being done. A vindication he considered to be imperatively required: but he was afraid that his own was too personal. Shirley was aggrieved, because he pretends to have thought that the signing of the declaration would have ended the matter; but Shirley conveniently forgets: (1) that he himself had blackened Wesley's character throughout the three kingdoms; (2) that Wesley and his preachers had conceded nothing to their adversaries, except that the minutes of 1770 were "not sufficiently guarded in the way in which they are expressed"; (3) that, as Fletcher abundantly demonstrates, there was a terrible necessity for an enforcement of the doc-

trine of the minutes at this momentous period, both the pulpits and pews of churches being infected with the deadly antinomianism of the late Dr. Crisp; and (4) that, after all, the doctrine of the minutes was only one part of the controversy which the Calvinists had raised, and that there were other attacks on Wesley, made by men like Augustus Toplady, and the editor of the *Gospel Magazine*, which it was impossible, and, in fact, would have been criminally disastrous, to have passed without rebuke. 1771 Age 68

That Fletcher did not regret the publishing of his Vindication is evident from the alacrity he showed in the preparation and publishing of his "Second Check;" the chief object of which was to establish "the doctrine of justification by works in the day of judgment"; and to reprove Walter Shirley for insinuating, in his "Narrative," that this was a doctrine which Wesley and his fifty-three itinerant preachers had given up.

Shirley retired from the field of battle; but others took up the gauntlet. The *Gospel Magazine*, faithful to its character, was as furious as ever. In its August number, it published a review of the "Church of England vindicated from the Charge of Absolute Predestination," declaring that Wesley was its author's "dictator and employer." The work is pronounced "a composition of low scurrility and illiberal abuse." The writer is charged with having "horribly blasphemed, and daringly given the lie to the God of truth, by asserting that any justified soul may at last perish in hell." "Arminianism is a hodgepodge of human systems, made up of grace and works, so blended together as to destroy the true meaning of both."

In the same number was published Cleon's poem on "Wesley's apostasy from the genuine faith of the gospel, an awful proof that evil men and seducers wax worse and worse." One verse must serve as a specimen. After describing the doctrine of Wesley's minutes, Cleon writes:

> "In vain for worse may Wesley search the globe,
> A viper hatched beneath the harlot's robe;
> Rome, in her glory, has no greater boast,
> Than Wesley claims—to all conviction lost."

In the September number, "Simplex, from the neighbour-

1771 Age 68 hood of the Foundery," expresses his astonishment, that Shirley and his friends should have been satisfied with the declaration, signed at conference, inasmuch as "it denies not one tittle clearly asserted in the minutes." Wesley is credited with possessing "the unfathomable policy of a dubious divine." He is a "fox," who "has had sagacity enough to elude his hunters;" and "evidently shows that he never meant to recant what he had declared in the minutes, when he signed the declaration."

In a subsequent number, "Simplex" reappears, and tells his readers that he is "sorry to see the name of a Christian minister prefixed to such foul and futile productions as those of Mr. Sellon. Mr. Fletcher's pen is more cleanly, but every whit as unfair. He is like a madman flinging abroad firebrands, arrows, and death, amongst those who differ from him. Master Thomas Olivers has shocked common decency in his letter to Mr. Toplady. And Mr. Wesley must be more explicit than he has been accustomed to be, before he can give a satisfactory answer to Simplex's querulous epistle." These are moderate specimens of the tone and language of the *Gospel Magazine.*

Another brace of antagonists must be mentioned, Richard and Rowland Hill, the sons of Sir Rowland Hill, the former born in 1732, and the latter in 1745. Richard had been educated at Westminster, and had spent four or five years at Magdalen college, Oxford. Rowland had been sent to Eton, and then to Cambridge university. Both the brothers had turned preachers, though, as yet, neither of them had been ordained. They were young, proud, and irascible; and, with greater zeal than prudence, entered into the Calvinian conflict.

Richard Hill published[1] a sixpenny pamphlet, 8vo, of 31 pages, entitled "A Conversation between Richard Hill, Esq., the Rev. Mr. Madan, and Father Walsh, superior of a convent of English Benedictine monks at Paris, held at the said convent, July 13, 1771, relative to some doctrinal Minutes, advanced by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley and others, at a conference in London, August 7, 1770. To which are added some Remarks by the Editor; as also Mr. Wesley's own Declara-

[1] See Sir Richard Hill's Life, p. 191.

tion concerning his Minutes, versified by another Hand." A prodigiously long title of a supremely silly tract, whose object is to show that Wesley's doctrine was a great deal worse than popery; in fact, that "popery is about midway between protestantism and Mr. J. Wesley." We content ourselves with Sir Richard's poetical version of Wesley's declaration: 1771 Age 68

> "Whereas, the religion and fate of three nations
> Depend on the importance of our conversations;
> And as some objections are thrown in our way,
> Our words have been construed to mean what they say;
> Be 't known from henceforth, to each friend and each brother,
> Whene'er we *say* one thing, we *mean* quite *another*."

Sir Richard was not content with this. He issued a penny 12mo tract of 12 pages, with the title, "An Answer to some capital Errors contained in the Minutes," etc., which finishes by reproducing the doggerel calumny just given, as though it were far too precious to be entombed in the more costly pamphlet with which he had enriched the Christian church.

His third publication,—by far the best,—was an octavo pamphlet of 40 pages, entitled, "Five Letters to the Reverend Mr. Fletcher, relative to his Vindication of the Minutes of the Reverend Mr. John Wesley." Apart from its theology, of which we say nothing, this was worthy of a scholar, a Christian, and a gentleman. The spirit of the piece is most loving, and the style unexceptionable.

The publications, on the other side, in addition to those of Fletcher, were three in number.

First, Wesley's tract of 12 pages, entitled, "The Consequence Proved"; without either the author's or the printer's name. Its object is to substantiate his former assertion, that the gist of Toplady's Zanchius is to teach that "one in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected, and nineteen in twenty are reprobate: that the elect shall be saved, do what they will; and the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can." Wesley says: "I have not leisure to consider the matter at large. I can only make a few strictures, and leave the young man (Toplady) to be farther corrected by one that is full his match, Mr. Thomas Olivers."[1]

[1] There was also published, at this period, a smartly written rebuke of

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To be handed over to Thomas Olivers was one of the bitterest pills that Toplady had to swallow. Olivers was a man of great intellectual power; but he had the misfortune to commence life as a Welsh mechanic of not the highest order. He was left an orphan when only four years old, and had now attained the age of forty-six. His publication, 12mo, 60 pages, was entitled, "A Letter to the Reverend Mr. Toplady, occasioned by his late Letter to the Reverend Mr. Wesley." In invective and tart rebuke, Toplady met a match in the intrepid and fiery Welshman who, on behalf of Wesley, undertook to fight the furious predestinarian with the not too respectable weapons of his own choosing. It certainly is difficult to decide which is the more proficient in the use of strong language. It was a fisticuff encounter between a pugilistic pair, whose thumping blows may be considered of equal force.

The third publication, alluded to above, was "The Church of England Vindicated from the Charge of Predestination, as it is stated and asserted by the Translator of Jerome Zanchius, in his Letter to the Rev. Dr. Nowell; together with some Animadversions on his Translation of Zanchius, his Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, and his Sermon on 1 Timothy i.10." 12mo, 129 pages. The author was the redoubtable Walter Sellon, who, for outspokenness, was only second to Toplady and Olivers themselves. At the same time, however, Sellon's book evinces great ability and research, and thoroughly demolishes the unfounded theories of an opponent, whose pen was guided by bigotry rather than by Christian discretion. The castigation was severe, but it was merited. The lash of a scorpion whip is far from pleasant; but the man who uses it has no reason to complain of another using it in self defence. Toplady had a right to wince and writhe; but, under the circumstances, he had no right to foam, as, in succeeding chapters, we shall find he did.

Here, for the present, we shall leave this embittered conflict, and trace the steps of the illustrious man whose high position seemed to engender the envy which led to the attack

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Toplady, and a defence of Wesley, entitled, "A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Augustus Toplady, written in great part by himself, relative to part of his printed Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley." 8vo, 21 pages.

upon him; but who, excepting a short skirmish now and then, pursued his high and holy mission with as much serenity as if the conflict had not existed. 1771 Age 68

He landed in Ireland on March 24, and re-embarked for England on July 22nd following.

At Dublin, the society had been jangling for years, and, as a consequence, had suffered loss. Though not expressly stated, it is clear that the cause of their quarreling was a dispute respecting the authority of the preachers and of the leaders respectively. Wesley, as the fountain of Methodistic law, now laid it down that classleaders had no authority to restrain the assistant, if they thought he acted improperly; but might mildly speak to him, and then refer the matter to Wesley to be decided. They had no "authority to hinder a person from preaching, or to displace a particular leader, or to expel a particular member, or to regulate the temporal and spiritual affairs of the society, or to make any public collection, or to receive the yearly subscription." All this was the work of the assistant, with one exception, namely, that the temporal affairs of the society were regulated by the society steward. The power of a classleader simply consisted in authority to meet his class, to receive their contributions, and to visit his sick members; and the power of all classleaders united was "authority to show their classpapers to the assistant, and to deliver the money they had received to the stewards, and to bring in the names of the sick."

Rightly or wrongly, such was Methodist discipline in 1771. "In the Methodist discipline," writes Wesley, "the wheels regularly stand thus: the assistant, the preachers, the stewards, the leaders, the people. But here the leaders, who are the lowest wheel but one, were quite got out of their place. They were got at the top of all, above the stewards, the preachers, yea, and above the assistant himself. To this chiefly, I impute the gradual decay of the work of God in Dublin." "Nothing," says he, at Londonderry, where two years before he had organised a band of singers, which through the preacher's neglect was now dispersed, "Nothing will stand in the Methodist plan unless the preacher has his heart and his hand in it. Every preacher, therefore, should consider it is not his business to mind this or that thing only, but everything."

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More than three months of Wesley's time were spent, not in Dublin, but in itinerating the Irish provinces. In many instances, he was gladdened with the prosperity of the work of God; in others, as Dublin, Athlone, Tullamore, Waterford, Cork, and Augher, the aspect of things was far from promising.

While on this lengthened journey, Wesley made the following entry in his journal: "1771. June 28—This day I entered the sixty-ninth year of my age. I am still a wonder to myself. My voice and strength are the same as at nine-and-twenty. This also hath God wrought."

Wesley remained in Ireland until he was obliged to leave in order to meet his conference at Bristol. Much space has been already occupied with an account of its important proceedings; but it may be added that, notwithstanding the Calvinian disturbances, there was reported an increase of 1934 members. Among others, Joseph Benson was received on trial as an itinerant preacher; and Francis Asbury and Richard Wright were sent as a reinforcement to America. Nearly £1700 were contributed to extinguish the chapel debts; and, to accomplish the thing at once, it was recommended that, upon an average, every Methodist, in the three kingdoms, should give, for one year, a penny a week. "If this is done," says Wesley, "it will both pay our whole debt, and supply all contingencies."

No sooner was the conference over than Wesley set out for Wales, where he laboured nearly the next three weeks. One of the Sundays was spent in Pembroke, where he preached in two of the churches. He writes: "Many of the congregation were gay, genteel people; so I spake on the first elements of the gospel. But I was still out of their depth. Oh how hard it is to be shallow enough for a polite audience!"

Returning to Bristol on August 31, he employed the next month in visiting the societies surrounding that city. Twelve months before, he had rejoiced over an apparently great religious revival in Kingswood school; but now, says he, "it is gone! It is lost! It is vanished away! There is scarce any trace of it remaining! Then we must begin again; and, in due time, we shall reap if we faint not."

Just at this period, Dr. William Cadogan's book on the

gout and all chronic diseases was attracting great attention. Dr. Johnson called it "a good book in general, but a foolish one in particulars." Wesley read the book, and agrees with Cadogan, that "very few of the chronic distempers are properly hereditary; and that most of them spring either from indolence, or intemperance, or irregular passions. But," he adds, and here he comes in conflict with modern teetotallers, "but why should Dr. Cadogan condemn wine *toto genere*, which is one of the noblest cordials in nature? Yet stranger, why should he condemn bread? Great whims belong to great men!" 1771 Age 68

After an absence of seven months, Wesley got back to London on Saturday, October 5; and, on the Monday following, set out on his usual tour through the counties of Bedford and Northampton. This occupied a week, as did a similar visit to the societies in Oxfordshire. For many years, Wesley was accustomed to spend the last two or three months in each year in weekly journeys from London as a pastoral centre. The Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire journey was one; the Oxfordshire another; Chatham and Sheerness a third; Staplehurst, Rye, Winchelsea, and other places a fourth; and Norfolk a fifth, which generally occupied a longer time.

Wesley concludes the year with this entry: "December 30—At my brother's request, I sat again for my picture. This melancholy employment always reminds me of that natural reflection,—

> 'Behold, what frailty we in man may see!
> His shadow is less given to change than he.'"

Little more remains to be related respecting the year 1771, except the points following.

It is a curious fact, that, in the year when Fletcher began to render Wesley important service by the publication of his "Checks," Fletcher's future wife, Miss Bosanquet, applied to Wesley for advice on the subject of female preaching. Our space prevents the possibility of discussing such a topic at the length which it deserves; but Wesley's letter, hitherto unpublished, will be acceptable, as showing that, however much importance he was disposed to attach to church order, he was not the man to make all things bend to it.

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"LONDONDERRY, *June* 13, 1771.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—I think the strength of the cause rests there,—on your having an *extraordinary* call. 'So, I am persuaded, has every one of our lay preachers; otherwise, I could not countenance his preaching at all. It is plain to me, that the whole work of God termed Methodism is an extraordinary dispensation of His providence. Therefore, I do not wonder if several things occur therein, which do not fall under the ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul's ordinary rule was, 'I permit not a woman to speak in the congregation.' Yet, in extraordinary cases, he made a few exceptions; at Corinth in particular.

"I am, my dear sister, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

In 1771, Wesley began a revision and republication of all the works which he had published during the last five-and-thirty years, with the exception of his Notes on the Old and New Testament, his "Christian Library," his "Natural Philosophy," and his books for Kingswood school. It was during this year that he issued a careful reprint of the four volumes of sermons published in 1746, 48, 50, and 60, with the addition of ten sermons, most of which had been published separately.

Besides these, he published five 12mo volumes of his collected works, embracing the sermons just mentioned; and making together about 1800 printed pages, in which he not only corrected the errors of the press, but his own mistakes, and did, what has not been done in any subsequent edition of his works,—placed an asterisk before the passages and paragraphs which he judged were most worthy of the reader's notice.

He likewise published the fourteenth "Extract" from his journal, extending from May 27, 1765, to May 5, 1768. 12mo, 128 pages.[2]

[1] Manuscript letter.

[2] As a curiosity, and as tending to show that, in this season of excitement, all men were not Wesley's enemies, we give an extract from a review of this section of Wesley's Journal, published in *Lloyd's Evening Post*, for January 20, 1772:—"In this interval, between May 27, 1765, and May 5, 1768, this zealous and truly laborious missionary of the Methodists, who seems to consider the three kingdoms as his parochial cure, twice traverses the greater part of Ireland and Scotland, from Londonderry to Cork, from Aberdeen to Dumfries, visiting and confirming the churches, besides making a progress, chiefly on horseback (in many places more than once), through great part of Wales, and almost all the counties in England, from Newcastle to Southampton, from Dover to Penzance. Those who expect to find in this Journal only the peculiar tenets of Methodism will be agreeably dis-

His only other publications were his "Consequence Proved," and his "Defence" of his minutes, already mentioned; and finally, "A Letter to the Reverend Mr. Fleury," of Waterford, in Ireland. Mr. Fleury was a young parson, who, both in 1769, and now again in 1771, had taken the opportunity of Wesley's visits to Waterford to preach against him. Wesley writes: "1771, May 28—At eleven, and again in the afternoon, I went to the cathedral, where a young gentleman most valiantly encountered the 'grievous wolves,' as he termed the Methodists. I never heard a man strike more wide of the mark. However, the shallow discourse did good; for it sent abundance of people, rich and poor, to hear and judge for themselves." The "young gentleman's" two sermons, which were published, were made up of the stale objections and invectives that had been used, by his superiors and seniors, times without number. Wesley's letter is a characteristic reply to them. 1771 Age 68

appointed, as they are intermixed with such occasional reflections on men and manners, on polite literature, and even on polite places, as prove that the writer is endued with a taste well cultivated both by reading and observation; and above all with such a benevolence and sweetness of temper, such an enlarged, liberal, and truly protestant way of thinking towards those who differ from him, as clearly show that *his heart*, at least, is right, and justly entitle him to that candour and forbearance, which, for the honour of our common religion, we are glad to find he now generally receives."

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WESLEY'S first journey from London, in 1772, was on the 16th of January, when he came to Luton, and preached in the parish church. The friendly clergyman, who gave him this permission, was the Rev. Mr. Copleston, whose son afterwards became a Methodist local preacher, and was driven from Luton by the iron hand of persecution, and then, after preaching for a while at St. Albans, introduced Methodism into Leighton Buzzard, where he died, in 1835, at the age of seventy, having been an earnest Methodist more than fifty years.[1]

In a visit to Dorking, Wesley read Sterne's "Sentimental Journey," and writes, "*Sentimental!* What is that? It is not English; he might as well say *continental.* It is not sense. It conveys no determinate idea; yet one fool makes many, and this nonsensical word (who would believe it?) is become a fashionable one! However, the book agrees full well with the title; for one is as queer as the other. For oddity, uncouthness, and unlikeness to all the world beside, I suppose the writer is without a rival." This was a bold criticism on Laurence Sterne, and his recently published book, which was now immensely popular. On his return from Dorking, on February 12, Wesley writes: "I read a very different book, published by an honest quaker, on that execrable sum of all villanies, commonly called the slave trade. I read of nothing like it in the heathen world, whether ancient or modern; and it infinitely exceeds, in every instance of barbarity, whatever Christian slaves suffer in Mahommedan countries."

This is a remarkable utterance. It was in this very year that Granville Sharpe, the first of the English antislavery advocates, began to take up the subject; and it was not until fifteen years after this, that the "Society for the Suppression of the Slave Trade" was founded, of which, besides Sharpe,

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1835, p. 804.

two of the chief members were Thomas Clarkson, a young graduate of Cambridge, and William Wilberforce, who was then M.P. for the county of York. The book which Wesley read was probably written by Anthony Benezet, a French protestant, who, after being educated in England, became a quaker in Philadelphia; and, in 1762, published the work which first attracted the attention of this country[1] to the inhuman traffic, which Wesley so justly designates "that execrable sum of all villanies." Let it be noted that, besides all his other honours, John Wesley, the poor, persecuted Methodist, was one of the first advocates on behalf of the enthralled African that England had, and that, sixty years before slavery was abolished in the dominions of Great Britain, he denounced the thing in the strongest terms it was possible to employ. 1772 Age 69

Before we accompany Wesley on his long northern tour, three other facts, belonging to this period, may be briefly mentioned.

Ten years ago, Thomas Maxfield had dishonourably forsaken his old friend, and had set up a rival church in the neighbourhood of Moorfields. For some reason, he now seemed to desire a reunion. Wesley was not the man to repel an overture even from one whose behaviour had been ungrateful and treacherous. He met Maxfield; but writes: "He only *seemed* to desire a reunion; for when we explained upon the head, I found he meant just nothing."

Wesley was now close upon the age of threescore years and ten. His life had been a scene of unparalleled activity; and, though still possessed of amazing vigour, he had not the energy he had been wont to have. His friends in London saw this; and hence the following entry in his journal. "1772. Feb. 21.—I met several of my friends, who had begun a subscription to prevent my riding on horseback, which I cannot do quite so well, since a hurt which I got some months ago. If they continue it, well; if not, I shall have strength according to my need."

Wesley's last act before leaving London was to open a new chapel at Poplar. He writes: "1772. Feb. 28—I opened the new preaching house in Poplar: one might say, conse-

[1] "Encyclopædia Britannica," article "Slavery."

1772 crated it; for the English law (notwithstanding the vulgar
Age 69 error) does not require, nay, does not allow, any other consecration of churches than by performing public service therein."

Up to this period, the preaching at Poplar had been in private dwellings, and in the workhouse, the mistress of which was a Methodist. Now a wooden building was erected in High Street, which was long called, out of derision, "the pantile shop." One of the first members was Benjamin King, who previous to this attended Gravel Lane chapel, Wapping, one of the oldest Methodist meeting-houses in London, but which was long since demolished for the making of the London Docks. For many a year, Methodism at Poplar had a struggle for existence, and often was Wesley importuned to give up the preaching there; but his constant answer was, "Does the old woman" (Mrs. Clippendale) "who sits in the corner of the long pew, still attend?" "O yes," was the reply; "she never misses." "Then for her sake keep going," was Wesley's rejoinder. The venerable woman, who was thus the means of perpetuating Methodist preaching at Poplar, was a native of Swalwell, near Newcastle, and, at twelve years of age, received her first society ticket, in 1745, from the hands of Wesley. Four years later, she came to London, and continued a faithful Methodist for above seventy years.[1]

Strangely enough, it was now currently reported that Wesley was about to leave England for America. The following refers to this.

"NEW YORK, *April* 1, 1772.

"REVEREND SIR,—By a letter from Mr. Lloyd, of London, we are informed that you incline to visit America. Mr. Whitefield's preaching was of unspeakable use to many; but he preached mostly in the seaport towns, and the most populous parts of the provinces, where the gospel was known, though not preached in power. In the back parts, which are now grown populous, the inhabitants are still in a state of deplorable ignorance. If some zealous and able teachers would engage heartily in the work of their conversion, how soon might rivers spring forth in the desert, and these owls and dragons of the wilderness give honour to God. No doubt, many in England and elsewhere, who abound in wealth, would contribute towards erecting schools to teach the children, and also towards the support of preachers, if such an undertaking was properly set on foot. But who is qualified for this work? I know none except yourself.

[1] Manuscript; and *Methodist Magazine*, 1835, p. 494.

"But, dear sir, what concerns me more than all is the unhappy condition of our negroes, who are kept in worse than Egyptian bondage. The food we eat, the clothes we wear, and all the superfluities we possess, are the produce of their labours; and what do they receive in return? Nothing equivalent; on the contrary, we keep from them the key of knowledge; so that their bodies and souls perish together in our service! If, therefore, you are not too advanced in years, I say to you, in the name of God, come over and help us; in doing which you will greatly oblige many thousands, and, among the rest, your friend and brother,

"JONATHAN BRYAN."[1]

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Did Wesley seriously think of this? We are not sure; but the following characteristic letter to Walter Sellon will be read with interest.

"*February* 1, 1772.

"DEAR WALTER,—You do not understand your information right. Observe, 'I am going to America to turn bishop.' You are to understand it in *sensu composito*. I am not to be a bishop till I am in America. While I am in Europe, therefore, you have nothing to fear. But as soon as ever you hear of my being landed in Philadelphia, it will be time for your apprehensions to revive. It is true, some of our preachers would not have me stay so long; but I keep my old rule, *Festina lente*.

"I am, dear Walter, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Previous to his leaving London, Wesley commenced a long correspondence, which extended over the next two years, with Samuel Sparrow, Esq., a gentleman in the neighbourhood of Sheffield, who had published a volume, entitled "Family Prayers and Moral Essays," a copy of which was presented to Wesley by the author. The writer has before him the correspondence that ensued; and perhaps the following extracts, from some of Wesley's letters, will be acceptable.

"To the questions which you propose I answer: (1) I think that if a hundred, or a hundred thousand, sincere, honest, humble, modest, self-diffident men were, with attention and care, to read the New Testament, uninfluenced by any but the Holy Spirit, nine in ten of them, at least, if not every one, would discover that the Son of God was 'adorable,' and one God with the Father; and would be immediately led to 'honour Him even as they honoured the Father.'

"(2) Give a fair, impartial reading to that account of mankind in their present state, which is contained in the book on original sin. It is no play of imagination, but plain, clear fact. We see it with our eyes,

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1785, p. 167.
[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 43.

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and hear it with our ears daily. Heathens, Turks, Jews, Christians of every nation, are such men as are there described. Such are the tempers, such the manners, of lords, gentlemen, clergymen in England, as well as of tradesmen and the low vulgar. No man in his senses can deny it: and none can account for it, but upon the supposition of original sin.

"On Scripture and common sense I build all my principles; and just so far as it agrees with these, I regard human authority.

"There is too 'just ground for charging the preachers both at Blackfriars church, the chapel at the Lock,[1] and the Tabernacle, with grievous want of charity; for most of them flatly maintain, 'all who do not believe as they believe, are in a state of damnation;' all who do not believe the absolute decree of election, which necessarily infers absolute reprobation. My brother and I set out on two principles: (1) None go to heaven without holiness of heart and life; (2) Whoever follows after this, whatever his opinions be, is my brother; and we have not swerved a hair's breadth from either the one or the other to this day."

On the 1st of March Wesley set out on his northern visitation, and did not return to London until seven months afterwards. It was now that he preached his first sermon in the town of Leek, where Thomas Hanby, eighteen years before, had formed a society at the peril of his life. "Kill him, kill him," bawled the mob, as they pelted him with showers of stones; but the young evangelist, then only in the twenty-first year of his age, mercifully escaped; and the rabble, headed by a lawyer, had to content themselves with merely burning him in effigy.[2]

Wesley writes: "March 27, 1772.—While I was dining at Leek, some gentlemen of the town sent to desire I would give them a sermon. As it seemed to be a providential call, I did not think it right to refuse. A large congregation quickly ran together, and were deeply attentive."

A society had recently been gathered at Nantwich, of which Mr. Salmon, an eccentric Christian gentleman, and some of his sisters, were members; and hence Nantwich was now added to the places which Wesley had to visit. This was probably the Mr. Salmon who was to have gone with the Wesleys to Georgia, but who was forcibly detained in his Cheshire home by his father and mother, who were distracted at the thought of their son leaving them. Joseph Whittingham

[1] Messrs. Romaine and Madan.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1780, p. 546.

Salmon had a good heart, but muddy head. Soon after this, he began to preach,[1] and, at the death of his wife, in 1785, published a long rigmarole funeral sermon, 8vo, 39 pages, which he preached in Barker Street chapel, Nantwich, and which is strongly spiced with the mystical delusion into which he had fallen. It is scarcely too much to say, that the weak mind of this well meaning man henceforth lost its balance, and that mystic pride and *cacoethes scribendi* were the chief features that distinguished the close of a lengthened but lustreless life. His wife, however, and several of the Misses Salmon were intelligent and earnest Methodists, and were among the earliest friends of Hester Ann Roe, afterwards Mrs. Rogers.[2] 1772 Age 69

There was another gentleman of note, near Nantwich, Sir Thomas Broughton, of Doddington Hall, who had a chapel in his park, and who, though not a Methodist, himself read or preached to the congregation the whole of Wesley's sermons from first to last.[3] Salmon tells us, that this "reverend baronet," as he calls him, at the death of his lady, called together his eleven children and his thirty servants, at eleven o'clock at night, and then, as they stood round the corpse, amid midnight silence and the dim radiance of lighted tapers, engaged in prayer, previous to the interment, the whole forming a scene not easily forgotten.

These were Methodism's auxiliaries in the town of Nantwich; but, for long years, it had to struggle with adversity, its members worshipping in an old hired baptist chapel until the year 1808, when, chiefly through the help of Mr. Withinshaw, a new chapel was erected, and Nantwich was made a circuit town.[4]

On the 5th of April, Wesley reached Bolton and Manchester. In reference to the former town he writes: "How wonderfully has God wrought in this place! John Bennet, some years ago, reduced this society from sevenscore to twelve; and they are now risen to a hundred and seventy." At Manchester, Wesley "drank tea at Am. O.;" probably Adam

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1788, p. 217.
[2] Mrs. Rogers' manuscript journal. [3] Manuscript.
[4] *Methodist Magazine*, 1842, p. 728.

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Oldham's, and remarks: "But how was I shocked! The children that used to cling about me, and drink in every word, had been at a boarding school. There they had unlearned all religion, and even seriousness; and had learned pride, vanity, affectation, and whatever could guard them against the knowledge and love of God. Methodist parents, who would send your girls headlong to hell, send them to a fashionable boarding school!"

Proceeding by way of Whitehaven and Carlisle, Wesley came to Glasgow on April 18, and, a week later, arrived at Perth, where he was the provost's guest, and received an honour which fell to him only once again in his long lifetime. He shall tell his own story.

"1772. April 28, Tuesday. We walked through the Duke of Athol's gardens, in which was one thing I never saw before,—a summerhouse in the middle of a greenhouse, by means of which one might, in the depth of winter, enjoy the warmth of May, and sit surrounded with greens and flowers on every side.

"In the evening I preached once more at Perth, to a large and serious congregation. Afterwards they did me an honour I never thought of,—presented me with the freedom of the city. The diploma ran thus:—

"'*Magistratuum illustris ordo et honorandus senatorum cœtus inclytæ civitatis Perthensis, in debiti amoris et affectuum tesseram erga Johannem Wesley, immunitatibus præfatæ civitatis, societatis etiam et fraternitatis ædilitiæ privilegiis donarunt. Aprilis die* 28, *anno Sal.* 1772.'

"I question whether any diploma from the city of London be more pompous, or expressed in better Latin."

Eight days afterwards, the magistrates of Arbroath conferred on Wesley a similar mark of their respect.

While in this part of Scotland, Wesley read two Scotch authors, upon whom his criticisms are too racy to be omitted. He writes:

"In my way to Perth, I read over the first volume of Dr. Robertson's 'History of Charles the Fifth.' I know not when I have been so disappointed. It might as well be called the History of Alexander the Great. Here is a quarto volume of eight or ten shillings' price, containing dry verbose dissertations on feudal government, the substance of all which might be comprised in half a sheet of paper! But 'Charles the Fifth!' Where is Charles the Fifth?

'Leave off thy reflections, and give us thy tale!'"

"May 5. I read over, in my journey to Arbroath, Dr. Beattie's in-

genious 'Inquiry after Truth.' He is a writer quite equal to his subject, and far above the match of all the minute philosophers, David Hume in particular, the most insolent despiser of truth and virtue that ever appeared in the world. And, yet, it seems some complain of this doctor's using him with too great severity! I cannot understand how that can be, unless he treated him with rudeness (which he does not), since he is an avowed enemy to God and man, and to all that is sacred and valuable on earth." 1772 Age 69

On the 9th of May, Wesley reached Edinburgh, where his state of health was made the subject of an important medical examination. It has been already stated that, before he left London, his friends there, perceiving signs of age and debility, had contributed to provide him a carriage in which to pursue his extensive and laborious journeys. Since then, in less than ten weeks, he had travelled, in his chaise and on horseback, from London to Bristol, and thence to Birmingham, Nottingham, Macclesfield, Chester, Liverpool, Manchester, Whitehaven, Carlisle, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh, preaching there, and at a great number of intervening towns and villages, sometimes as many as four sermons in a day. He had had to encounter winter storms, to wade mid-leg deep in snow, and to travel roads so execrably bad, that sometimes he was literally bogged. Not unfrequently he preached in the midst of piercing winds in the open air; and yet, there is not a single entry in his journal indicative of failing health. Never, in his life, was he more intent upon the prosecution of his great work than now. Writing to his brother from Congleton, and again from Perth, he says:

"I find almost all our preachers, in every circuit, have done with Christian perfection. They say, they believe it; but they never preach it, or not once in a quarter. What is to be done? Shall we let it drop, or make a point of it? Oh what a thing it is to have *curam animarum!* You and I are called to this; to save souls from death; to watch over them as those that must give account! If our office implied no more than preaching a few times in a week, I could play with it; so might you. But how small a part of our duty (yours as well as mine) is this! God says to you, as well as me, 'Do all thou canst, be it more or less, to save the souls for whom My Son has died.' Let this voice be ever sounding in our ears; then shall we give up our account with joy. *Eia age, rumpe moras!* I am ashamed of my indolence and inactivity. Your business, as well as mine, is to save souls. When we took priests' orders we undertook to make it our one business. I think every day lost, which is not (mainly at least) employed in this thing. *Sum totus in illo.*

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"I am glad you are to be at Bristol soon. To whom shall I leave my letters and papers? I am quite at a loss. I think Mr. Fletcher is the best that occurs now. Adieu!"[1]

Wesley was too busy to think of being ill. He was not alarmed; but his friends were. Hence, the following addressed to Charles Wesley.

"SHOREHAM, *April* 18, 1772.

"MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,—I doubt not, but we both join in constant petitions, at the throne of grace, for the life and health of our dear absent friend, thy brother. By all accounts, his valuable health is in a precarious state; and unless God provides (as I doubt not but He will), for His people, they will have abundant reason to mourn. May God give thee a double portion of His Spirit, that thou mayest stand in the gap, and prevent the flock being led by any who have not true gospel light in the head, and great integrity in the heart! My love to thy dear brother; the same attends thee and my dear sister, and all thy family. The Divine blessing be with all of us!

"Thine, most affectionately,

"VINCENT PERRONET."[2]

Probably it was the request of his friends, rather than his own anxiety, which induced Wesley, at Edinburgh, to submit to a medical examination.

At this period, Dr. James Hamilton was a young man of about two-and-thirty, and was practising medicine in his native town of Dunbar, where he also had joined the Methodists. Afterwards he removed to Leeds, and then to London, where he was elected physician to the London Dispensary, and rose to eminence in the medical profession. He died in Finsbury Square, April 21, 1827, at the age of eighty-seven, having been a Methodist upwards of sixty years, and nearly as long a highly acceptable and useful local preacher.

Dr. Alexander Monro was a few years older. Such was his ability, that, at the age of twenty-two, he was appointed professor of anatomy and surgery to the University of Edinburgh; and is said, by the excellence of his lectures, to have materially assisted in raising it to the highest celebrity as a school of medicine.

Dr. James Gregory was now a young man in his twentieth

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 129.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1785, p. 269.

year; but, two years later, was appointed professor of the theory of physic, and rose to such eminence in his profession as to draw pupils from all parts of the world. 1772 Age 69

These were the three physicians who attended Wesley. He writes: "May 18—Dr. Hamilton brought with him Dr. Monro and Dr. Gregory. They satisfied me what my disorder was; and told me there was but one method of cure. Perhaps but one natural one; but I think God has more than one method of healing either the soul or the body."

Wesley's disease was hydrocele.[1] A few months later, he writes: "I am almost a disabled soldier. I am forbid to ride, and am obliged to travel mostly in a carriage."[2]

That Wesley's health was seriously affected there cannot be a doubt. *Lloyd's Evening Post*, for June 15, remarks: "By accounts from Scotland, we learn that the Rev. Mr. Wesley has had a dangerous fit of illness, in which he was attended by three of the most eminent of the faculty there, who gave him over; but some younger gentlemen in practice have been luckily assistant to him, and they have now hopes that he may continue his ministry many years longer."

Wesley doubtless was amused with this. During his ten days' stay in Edinburgh, he preached at least about half-a-dozen times; and, on the very day when the medical men met, he opened a new chapel at Leith, and two days later started for Newcastle, preaching on his way at Dunbar, Alnwick, and Morpeth.

Reaching Newcastle on May 25, he spent the remainder of the week in the town and neighbourhood, preaching, on the Sunday, three times out of doors, to immense and attentive congregations.

The first four days in the month of June were occupied with what he calls "a little tour through the dales"; and, in this brief period, besides travelling scores of miles over "the horrid mountains," and examining societies, he preached at least eight sermons. He writes: "from the top of an enormous mountain we had a view of Weardale. It is a lovely prospect. The green, gently rising meadows and fields, on both sides of the little river, clear as crystal, were sprinkled

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. iii., p. 449. [2] Ibid. vol. xii., p. 369.

1772 Age 69 over with innumerable little houses; three in four of which, if not nine in ten, are sprung up since the Methodists came hither. Since that time, the beasts are turned into men, and the wilderness into a fruitful field."

Six months before this, Weardale had been blessed with a remarkable religious revival, the penitent prayer-meetings often continuing till ten or eleven o'clock at night, and sometimes till four in the morning. On one occasion, four young men, seeking pardon, remained on their knees for five hours together. Among others who found mercy was an old woman, who, twenty-three years before, was the first in Weardale to receive the Methodists into her house. Sometimes as many as half-a-dozen "lay on the ground together, roaring for the disquietude of their hearts." Chiefly through the instrumentality of Jane Salkeld, a schoolmistress, thirty children were converted, including Phœbe Featherstone, Hannah Watson, and others whom Wesley mentions.

Not only does Wesley give, at great length, the details of this revival; but he compares it with that at Everton thirteen years before. His remarks are worth quoting.

"It resembled the work at Everton in many respects, but not in all.

"It resembled that work—(1) In its unexpected beginning; no such work had ever been seen before either at Everton or in Weardale. (2) In the swiftness of its progress, I mean in the persons affected; many of whom were in one day, or even two or three hours, both convinced of sin (without any previous awakening), and converted to God. (3) In the number of persons both convinced and converted, which was greater in a few months than it had been in Weardale from the first preaching there, or in Everton for a century. (4) In the outward symptoms which have attended it: in both, the sudden and violent emotions of mind affected the whole bodily frame; insomuch that many trembled exceedingly, many fell to the ground, many were violently convulsed, and many seemed to be in the agonies of death. (5) In most of the instruments whom God employed: these were plain, artless men, simple of heart, but without any remarkable gifts; men who, almost literally, knew 'nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.'

"In these respects, the work of God in Weardale nearly resembled that at Everton; but, in other respects, they were widely different. For—(1) That was the first work of God, of the kind, which had ever been in those parts in the memory of man; this was only a revival of a work, which had continued for many years. Now these circumstances are common at the dawn of a work, but afterwards very uncommon. I do not remember to have seen the like anywhere in the three kingdoms, unless at the beginning

of a work. (2) Although the former work was swift, the latter was far swifter. In general, persons were both awakened and justified in a far shorter time. (3) A far greater number were converted to God in Weardale than about Everton, although the number of hearers about Everton was abundantly greater than in Weardale. (4) Although the outward symptoms were the same, yet in Weardale there were none of the dreams, visions, and revelations which abounded at Everton; and which, though at first they undoubtedly were from God, yet were afterwards fatally counterfeited by the devil. (5) There was a great difference in the instruments whom God employed. Not one of those in or near Everton had any experience in the guiding of souls. None of them were more than 'babes in Christ,' if any of them so much. Whereas, in Weardale, not only the three preachers were, I believe, renewed in love, but most of the leaders were deeply experienced in the work of God. Hence, (6) we may easily account for the grand difference, namely, that the one work was so shallow, and the other so deep. Many children here have had far deeper experience, and more constant fellowship with God, than the oldest man or woman at Everton which I have seen or heard of." 1772 Age 69

Such were Wesley's moralisings on the Weardale revival, in 1772, in which less than a hundred people were converted, and concerning which he says: "upon the whole, we may affirm, such a work of God as this has not been seen before in the three kingdoms." If this was so, who will say that the former times were better than these? How many thousands of aged Methodists can easily call to mind far more remarkable revivals of the work of God than even that in Weardale! And, further, how was it that, at Wesley's visit two years after, the results of this revival were almost reduced to nothing, except that, in consequence of the backslidings, "the preachers were discouraged; and jealousies, heart burnings, and evil surmisings, were multiplied more and more"?

Wesley returned from Weardale to Newcastle on the 5th of June, and here, and in the immediate neighbourhood, he spent the next ten days. In the Newcastle society, there were fewer members than he had found two years before. "This," says he, "I can impute to nothing but the want of visiting from house to house; without which the people will hardly increase, either in number or grace." This was a sharp thrust at some of the most distinguished preachers of the day, namely, Peter Jaco, Joseph Cownley, Thomas Hanby, Matthew Lowes, Thomas Tennant, William Thompson, and Thomas Simpson, all of them appointed to Newcastle at this period.

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On June 15, Wesley left Newcastle, and spent the next week in preaching at Durham, Stockton, Yarm, Thirsk, Osmotherley, Hutton Rudby, Stokesley, Castleton, Whitby, Robinhood's Bay, and Scarborough. This was pretty well, for a man afflicted as Wesley was, and at the age of seventy.

Eighteen months before this, his termagant wife had abruptly left him, and gone to her house at Newcastle. Now that his health was so endangered, she was returning with him, whether to his comfort or otherwise we are not informed; but, at all events, she had in Wesley's chaise the undeserved luxury of a summer's ride through the most beautiful scenes of Yorkshire.[1]

From Scarborough he proceeded to Bridlington, Driffield, Beverley, Hull, York, Tadcaster, Pateley Bridge, Otley, Heptonstall, Keighley, Haworth, Bingley, Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, Morley, Birstal, Doncaster, Sheffield, Epworth, Brigg, Horncastle, Louth, Grimsby, Pontefract, Horbury, Wakefield, and other places, preaching at all of them, until, on August 2, he got to Leeds, for the purpose of holding his annual conference. This was enormous labour for any man, and especially for an old man, suffering from a severe and painful malady. To all this must be added, cottage accommodation, hard beds, and often hard living; and, though brutal persecution had considerably abated, Wesley was not entirely exempt from this; for, at Halifax, on July 8, a ruffian struck him most violently on the face, when, with tears starting from his eyes, the venerable saint acted upon the precept of his Master: "Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also"; a display of heroic meekness which cowed the brutal coward, and made him slink away into the ignoble crowd.[2] Yet, in the midst of all this, there is not a single syllable, in his journal, concerning either persecution, hardship, debility, or disease.

He writes: "On Tuesday, August 4, our conference began. Generally, during the time of conference, as I was talking from morning to night, I had used to desire one of our brethren to preach in the morning; but, having many things to say, I

[1] "Memoir of Mrs. Mortimer," p. 37; and Wesley's Works, vol. iii., p. 449.
[2] "Methodism in Halifax," p. 121.

resolved, with God's help, to preach mornings as well as evenings. And I found no difference at all; I was no more tired than with my usual labour; that is, no more than if I had been sitting still in my study from morning to night." 1772 Age 69

One of Wesley's sermons, preached to an immense congregation, in a field behind the chapel, was from Isaiah lxvi. 8, 9: "Who hath heard such a thing?" etc.; in which he dwelt upon the great work which God had wrought among the Methodists, discoursing on its rapidity, depth, extensiveness, and its growing character. "It was," says good old Thomas Rutherford, "marrow and fatness to my soul." [1]

Wesley, in needful cases, was a brave defender of his preachers. The following, addressed to Mr. Alexander Clark, of Dublin, and written at this period, will be read with interest.

"SHEFFIELD, *August* 10, 1772.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Now the hurry of conference is over, I get a little time to write. When I chose you to be steward in Dublin, you both loved and esteemed your preachers; but I find you have now drunk in the whole spirit of Pat. Geoghegan. O beware! You are exceedingly deceived. By this time, I should be some judge of man; and if I am, all England and Ireland cannot afford such a body of men, number for number, for sense and true experience, both of men and things, as the body of Methodist preachers. Our leaders in London, Bristol, and Dublin are by no means weak men. I would not be ashamed to compare them with a like number of tradesmen in every part of the three kingdoms. But I assure you, they are no more than children compared to the preachers in conference, as you would be thoroughly convinced, could you but have the opportunity of spending one day among them. Mr. Jaco will make a fair trial whether he can supply Dublin alone; if he cannot, he shall have another to help, for he must not kill himself to save charges. But I dare not stint him to £20 a year. He will waste nothing; but he must want nothing. You will make his stay among you, in every respect, as comfortable as you can.

"I am your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY." [2]

No sooner was the conference ended, than Wesley again started on his itinerancy of mercy. On his way to Burslem, his chaise broke down; but, notwithstanding his disease,

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1808, p. 482.
[2] *Irish Evangelist*, April, 1864.

1772 rather than disappoint the people, he mounted a horse and
Age 69 rode two-and-twenty miles, arriving just in time for preaching.

On reaching Trevecca, on August 14, he met his old friend, Howel Harris, who, while almost all others of his class had imbibed the most bitter feelings, still remained faithful. "I have borne," said the honest Welshman, "with these pert, ignorant young men, vulgarly called students, till I cannot, in conscience, bear any longer. They preach barefaced reprobation, and so broad antinomianism, that I have been constrained to oppose them to the face, even in the public congregation." This was no great compliment to the students of the Countess of Huntingdon, especially as coming from a Calvinist. Wesley, almost as an apology, adds to this: "It is no wonder that they should preach thus. What better can be expected from raw lads, of little understanding, little learning, and no experience?"

It is pleasing to add, that Howel Harris was not the only one of Whitefield's friends who still stood true to Wesley, though differing from his views. Hence the following, addressed to him by Cornelius Winter.

"BRECON, *August* 10, 1772.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—Do you ask what I have been about? I answer, preaching Christ wherever a door has been opened to me. Sometimes I have cast a handful of seed on your ground; and should it ever come to a harvest you are welcome to it: it will become Jesus's property at last. What melancholy consequences from late productions! They forbid me to be any longer an idle hearer or a careless reader. I have been obliged, from conscience, to make a stand against dear Mr. Fletcher's groundless arguments and most bitter invectives.[1] Many things, he has said, are a proper antidote applied wrong, and to improper objects, and thereby become poison, whereas they might have been a healing medicine. But I must say no more on this subject: I am writing to one who will give it little attention.

"Dr. Owen's 'Death of Death' has been my favourite study of late; and, in consequence of embracing the doctrine therein contained, I must agree to disagree with Mr. Fletcher's thoughts, and dear Mr. Wesley's *friendly pen.* Excuse my frank acknowledgments, and give me leave to differ and love. God bless you to your latest period, and make your last

[1] Wesley justly appends a note to this: "Let the unbiased reader judge, whether Mr. Fletcher has made use of groundless arguments or bitter invectives."

days your best! So prays, reverend and dear sir, yours most respectfully and affectionately, in our dear Lord Jesus, 1772 Age 69

"CORNELIUS WINTER."[1]

From Trevecca, Wesley proceeded to Bristol, and here, and in the neighbourhood, he employed the next seven weeks. In Bristol itself, he "visited the whole society from house to house, taking them from west to east." He not unfrequently preached in the open air, and strikingly remarks: "to this day field preaching is a cross to me; but I know my commission, and see no other way of preaching the gospel to every creature." The children at Kingswood, and at Miss Owen's school at Publow, were almost all converted. He writes: "I suppose such a visitation of children has not been known in England these hundred years!"[2] "Publow is now what Leytonstone was once. Here is a family indeed. Such mistresses, and such a company of children, as I believe all England cannot parallel!"

Leaving Bristol on October 5, and preaching on his way at Shaftesbury, Salisbury, Winchester, and Portsmouth, he came to London on October 10. He had been seven months from home, if indeed he had a home! and yet, after spending only one day in London, he again set out on his usual preaching tour in the counties of Bedford and Northampton. Returning to London, where he spent another day, he started on his visitation in Oxfordshire. Returning again to London, and again spending a single day, he went off, on October 26, to Norfolk, where he employed a fortnight. Except making a journey into Kent, and another to Hertfordshire, the remainder of the year was passed in the metropolis.

Here he again began expounding, chiefly in the mornings, "that compendium of all the Holy Scriptures, the first epistle of St. John." Now, for the first time in his life, he saw the chapel at Snowfields full. He opened a new chapel at Dorking, and another in the parish of Bromley. He visited the sick Methodists in London, and "was surprised that they were so few." And on December 31 he wrote: "Being greatly embarrassed by the necessities of the poor, we spread

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1785, p. 336.
[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 357.

1772 Age 69 all our wants before God in solemn prayer; believing that He would sooner 'make windows in heaven' than suffer His truth to fail."

This reference to the poor requires further notice. The long continued war, a succession of inferior harvests, and other unfavourable events, had raised the price of provisions to such an extent, that the distress of the nation had become alarming. In the month of November, the court of common council of London agreed to petition parliament to open the ports of the kingdom for the free importation of all kinds of grain; and one of the members proposed that, in order to prevent the unnecessary consumption of flour, the making of starch should be prohibited. Long letters on the starved condition of the country were published in the newspapers and magazines. Some of them entered into elaborate calculations, showing that, in London only, during the six winter months, twenty thousand sheep and two thousand oxen were used in making soup for taverns, and the tables of the great. When the king opened parliament, on November 26, he referred in his speech to the dearness of corn, and recommended "my lords and gentlemen" to consider a scheme "for alleviating the distresses of the poor." This was done, and bills were passed, which substantially permitted the importation of foreign grown grain duty free.

In the midst of all this, Wesley was far from being an indifferent spectator; and, among the many letters which appeared in the periodicals of the day, one written by himself was not the least important. This letter, published, either by himself or others, in *Lloyd's Evening Post*, for December 21, and in the *Leeds Mercury* for December 29, and in other newspapers and magazines, is altogether too curious and characteristic to be omitted or abridged. It is as follows.

"*To the Editor of 'Lloyd's Evening Post.'*

"SIR,—Many excellent things have been lately published concerning the *present scarcity of provisions.* And many causes have been assigned for it; but is not something wanting in most or those publications? One writer assigns one cause, another one or two more, and strongly insists upon them. But who has assigned all the causes that manifestly concur to produce this melancholy effect? at the same time pointing out, how each particular cause affects the price of each particular sort of provision?

"I would willingly offer to candid and benevolent men a few hints on this important subject, proposing a few questions, and adding to each what seems to be the plain and direct answer. 1772 Age 69

"I. 1. I ask first, Why are thousands of people starving, perishing for want, in every part of England? The fact I know: I have seen it with my eyes, in every corner of the land. I have known those who could only afford to eat a little coarse food every other day. I have known one picking up stinking sprats from a dunghill, and carrying them home for herself and her children. I have known another gathering the bones which the dogs had left in the streets, and making broth of them, to prolong a wretched life. Such is the case, at this day, of multitudes of people, in a land flowing, as it were, with milk and honey; abounding with all the necessaries, the conveniences, the superfluities of life!

"Now why is this? Why have all these nothing to eat? Because they have nothing to do. They have no meat, because they have no work.

"2. But why have they no work? Why are so many thousand people in London, in Bristol, in Norwich, in every county from one end of England to the other, utterly destitute of employment?

"Because the persons who used to employ them cannot afford to do it any longer. Many, who employed fifty men, now scarce employ ten. Those, who employed twenty, now employ one, or none at all. They cannot, as they have no vent for their goods; food now bearing so high a price, that the generality of people are hardly able to buy anything else.

"3. But to descend from generals to particulars. Why is breadcorn so dear? Because such immense quantities of it are continually consumed by *distilling*. Indeed, an eminent distiller, near London, hearing this, warmly replied: 'Nay, my partner and I generally distil *but a thousand quarters* of corn a week.' Perhaps so. Suppose five-and-twenty distillers, in and near the town, consume each only the same quantity. Here are five-and-twenty thousand quarters a week, that is, above twelve hundred and fifty thousand quarters a year, consumed in and about London! Add the distillers throughout England, and have we not reason to believe that half of the wheat produced in the kingdom is every year consumed, not by so harmless a way as throwing it into the sea; but by converting it into deadly poison—poison that naturally destroys, not only the strength and life, but also the morals of our countrymen!

"'Well, but this brings in a large revenue to the king.' Is this an equivalent for the lives of his subjects? Would his majesty sell a hundred thousand of his subjects yearly to Algiers for four hundred thousand pounds? Surely no. Will he then sell them for that sum, to be butchered by their own countrymen?—'But otherwise the swine for the navy cannot be fed.' Not unless they are fed with human flesh? not unless they are fatted with human blood? O tell it not in Constantinople, that the English raise the royal revenue by selling the blood and flesh of their countrymen!

"4. But why are oats so dear? Because there are four times the horses

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kept (to speak within compass), for coaches and chaises in particular, than were some years ago. Unless, therefore, four times the oats grew now as grew then, they cannot be at the same price. If only twice as much is produced, (which perhaps is near the truth,) the price will naturally be double to what it was.

"As the dearness of grain of one kind will always raise the price of another, so whatever causes the dearness of wheat and oats must raise the price of barley too. To account therefore for the dearness of this, we need only remember what has been observed above, although some particular causes may concur in producing the same effect.

"5. Why are beef and mutton so dear? Because most of the considerable farmers, particularly in the northern counties, who used to breed large numbers of sheep or horned cattle, and frequently both, no longer trouble themselves with either sheep, or cows, or oxen; as they can turn their land to far better account, by breeding horses alone. Such is the demand, not only for coach and chaise horses, which are bought and destroyed in incredible numbers; but much more for bred horses, which are yearly exported by hundreds, yea thousands, to France.

"6. But why are pork, poultry, and eggs so dear? Because of the monopolising of farms, as mischievous a monopoly as was ever yet introduced into these kingdoms. The land which was formerly divided among ten or twenty little farmers, and enabled them comfortably to provide for their families, is now generally engrossed by one great farmer. One man farms an estate of a thousand a year, which formerly maintained ten or twenty. Every one of these little farmers kept a few swine, with some quantity of poultry; and, having little money, was glad to send his bacon, or pork, or fowls and eggs, to market continually. Hence, the markets were plentifully served, and plenty created cheapness; but, at present, the great, the gentlemen farmers, are above attending to these little things. They breed no poultry or swine, unless for their own use; consequently they send none to market. Hence, it is not strange, if two or three of these living near a market town occasion such a scarcity of these things, by preventing the former supply, that the price of them will be double or treble to what it was before. Hence, (to instance in a small article,) in the same town where, within my memory, eggs were sold eight or ten a penny, they are now sold six or eight a groat.

Another cause why beef, mutton, pork, and all kind of victuals are so dear, is *luxury*. What can stand against this? Will it not waste and destroy all that nature and art can produce? If a person of quality will boil down three dozen of neat's tongues, to make two or three quarts of soup (and so proportionably in other things), what wonder if provisions fail? Only look into the kitchens of the great, the nobility, and gentry, almost without exception (considering withal that the toe of the peasant treads upon the heel of the courtier), and when you have observed the amazing waste which is made there, you will no longer wonder at the scarcity, and consequently dearness, of the things which they use so much art to destroy.

"7. But why is land so dear? Because, on all these accounts, gentlemen cannot live as they have been accustomed to do, without increasing their income, which most of them cannot do but by raising their rents. The farmer, paying a higher rent for his land, must have a higher price for the produce of it. This again tends to raise the price of land. And so the wheel runs round. 1772 Age 6

"8. But why is it, that not only provisions and land, but well-nigh everything else is so dear? Because of the enormous taxes which are laid on almost everything that can be named. Not only abundant taxes are raised from earth, and fire, and water; but, in England, the ingenious statesmen have found a way to tax the very light! Only one element remains, and surely some man of honour will, ere long, contrive to tax this also. For how long shall the saucy air blow in the face of a gentleman, nay, a lord, without paying for it?

"9. But why are the taxes so high? Because of the national debt. They must be, while this continues. I have heard that the national expense, in the time of peace, was, sixty years ago, three millions a year. Now the bare interest of the public debt amounts to above four millions. To raise which, with the other expenses of government, those taxes are absolutely necessary.

"II. Here is the evil. But where is the remedy? Perhaps it exceeds all the wisdom of man to tell. But it may not be amiss to offer a few hints, even on this delicate subject.

"1. What remedy is there for this sore evil? Many thousand poor people are starving. Find them work; and you will find them meat. They will then earn and eat their own bread.

"2. But how shall their masters give them work, without ruining themselves? Procure vent for it, and it will not hurt their masters to give them as much work as they can do; and this will be done by sinking the price of provisions; for then people will have money to buy other things too.

"3. But how can the price of *wheat* be reduced? By prohibiting for ever that bane of health, that destroyer of strength, of life, and of virtue, *distilling*. Perhaps this alone will answer the whole design. If anything more be needful, may not all starch be made of rice, and the importation of this, as well as of wheat, be encouraged?

"4. How can the price of *oats* be reduced? By reducing the number of horses. And may not this be effectually done—(1) by laying a tax of ten pounds on every horse exported to France, (2) by laying an additional tax on gentlemen's carriages. Not so much for every wheel, (barefaced, shameless partiality!) but ten pounds yearly for every horse. And these two taxes alone would nearly supply as much as is now given for leave to poison his majesty's liege subjects.

"5. How can the price of *beef* and *mutton* be reduced? By increasing the breed of sheep and horned cattle. And this would be increased sevenfold, if the price of horses was reduced; which it surely would be half in half, by the method above mentioned.

"6. How can the price of *pork* and *poultry* be reduced? First, by

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letting no farms of above a hundred pounds a year. Secondly, by repressing luxury, either by example, by laws, or both.

"7. How may the price of *land* be reduced? By all the methods above named, all which tend to lessen the expense of housekeeping; but especially the last, restraining luxury, which is the grand source of poverty.

"8. How may the *taxes* be reduced? By discharging half the national debt, and so saving at least two millions a year.

"How this can be done the wisdom of the great council of the land can best determine.

"I am, sir, your humble servant,

"JOHN WESLEY.

"DOVER, *December* 9, 1772."

This was not the only thing that Wesley and the Methodists did, to contribute to the happiness of the starving poor. It was now that there was organised a band of pious Methodists, who made it their duty and their pleasure to visit the inmates of London workhouses, and, by prayer, and reading, and exhortation, to lead them to Him who is alone the great Comforter. That organisation has uninterruptedly existed down to the present time; and though, for the last twenty years, it has ceased to be a purely Methodist society, its chief workers bear the Methodistic name.[1] From the ninety-fifth annual report of what is now called "The Christian Community," we learn that this society was "established under the patronage of the Rev. John Wesley, in 1772;" and that its agents, all labouring gratuitously, are regularly visiting the workhouses of Shoreditch, St. Luke's, Clerkenwell, St. George's in the East, and Bethnal Green, in eighty-eight halls and wards of which they hold religious services every week; and that, besides this, they have three services weekly in Cambridge Heath female refuge; visit between twenty and thirty low lodging houses, in Spitalfields, every Sunday night; and, during the year, hold about 463 services in the

[1] Mr. George Mackie has the credit of founding this society. He died in 1821, after being a member of the Methodist society more than fifty years, and a zealous and respected local preacher for forty.—(*Methodist Magazine*, 1821, p. 939.) The rules of the Christian Community, published in 1811, required, that, "in order to admission, every candidate must have been a member of the late Rev. John Wesley's society twelve months; a man of strict piety and irreproachable character; and having a gift for prayer and exhortation."

open air, deliver nearly 1400 addresses,[1] and distribute almost a quarter of a million of religious tracts. Not fewer than 124 visitors and exhorters are employed, nearly the whole of whom have appointments every week. 1772 Age 69

Into such a society has been developed the small band of godly Methodists, sent forth by Wesley, in 1772, to visit London paupers and London vagabonds. Its work is little known, and its agents scarcely recognised; but here, in the very heart of London, are 124 home missionaries, toiling to convert the lowest of the low to the faith of Christ, receiving not a farthing for their services, and carrying on their extensive machinery of tract distribution, tent preaching, and a circulating library, at the small expense of about £200 a year. Success to this unpretending and almost unknown society. May the God of heaven prosper it, in its great work, more and more! "It is a shame," wrote Wesley to Joseph Benson, on December 11, 1772, "It is a shame for any Methodist preacher to confine himself to one place. We are debtors to all the world. We are called to warn every one, to exhort every one, if by any means we may save some. I love prayer-meetings, and wish they were set up in every corner of the town."[2]

Such is a bird's eye view of the work done, in 1772, by an old man, acutely suffering from the disease already mentioned. Writing to his brother in November, and again in December, Wesley says:

"I have just made my tour through Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex; but Kent, Sussex, and Hertfordshire still remain to be visited; only the visitation of the London classes, a fortnight's work, must come between.

"If we only join faith and works in all our preaching, we shall not fail of a blessing. But of all preaching, what is usually called gospel preaching is the most useless, if not the most mischievous: a dull, yea, or lively harangue on the sufferings of Christ, or salvation by faith, without strongly inculcating holiness. I see, more and more, that this naturally tends to drive holiness out of the world."

"I have scarce had a day yet" (December 15) "in London, except Sundays, and the time of visiting the classes. Dr. Ford has never come near

[1] The number of services held, indoors and out, during the year 1867, was 6558, and the number of addresses given 7524.

[2] Wesley's Works, vol. vii., p. 390.

1772 Age 69 me. I am afraid, *evasit, erupit.* I have wrote to Mr. Fletcher to-day. As Mr. Hill is to fall upon me next, Mr. Fletcher will have a little time to breathe; and probably a little more while Mr. Hill is digesting my reply; for whom I think we shall, between us, find work for some time.

"You will not set shoulder to shoulder, or you could say something about the Church. Two are better than one. If we live till August, stand by me, and we will put the matter home.

"I often cry out, *Vitæ me redde priori!* Let me be again an Oxford Methodist. I am often in doubt whether it would not be best for me to resume all my Oxford rules, great and small. I did then walk closely with God, and redeem the time. But what have I been doing these thirty years? My love to all. Adieu!—JOHN WESLEY."[1]

The concluding sentences of these extracts sound strangely. Did afflicted Wesley, amid the London fog of a dark December day, really think, that the last thirty years had been comparatively wasted, and that he was more pious when almost a cloistered monk within the walls of Oxford, than he was now, a veteran evangelist, flying through the three kingdoms, and preaching the gospel of God his Saviour? His medical adviser came not near him; Sir Richard Hill was wantonly assailing him; his brother, except as a localised pastor in London and in Bristol, was of no use to him; his wife—well—Is it surprising, that even Wesley had seasons of depression; and that, like others, he was sometimes "in heaviness through manifold temptations"?

But it is time to turn to the Calvinian controversy, which we left raging in 1771. Wesley rarely mentions it, either in his journal or in his letters, and yet it continued with undiminished fury.

Fletcher, of Madeley, again entered the field of battle, by publishing "A Third Check to Antinomianism," in a letter to Sir Richard Hill, 12mo, 114 pages. This was not only a defence of Wesley, but a triumphant answer to the "Five Letters" of the baronet, and is written in a style exceedingly beautiful and Christian. Before the year was out, it reached a second edition.

Fletcher's other publication, in 1772, was "Logica Genevensis; or, a Fourth Check to Antinomianism: in which St. James's pure religion is defended against the charges, and

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., pp. 130, 131.

established upon the concessions, of Mr. Richard and Mr. Rowland Hill. In a Series of Letters to those Gentlemen." 12mo, 237 pages.[1] 1772 Age 69

It is no part of our present plan to give even the briefest analysis of these masterly productions. Suffice it to say, that, for sound scriptural argument, able exposition, lively imagination, elegance of style, polished irony, and Christian temper, they have no superiors. The two brothers, notwithstanding their goodness, their learning, their genius, and their pluck, were but pigmies in the grasp of a Goliath.

Rowland Hill, a young man of twenty-seven, had experienced the mortification of being refused ordination by not fewer than six bishops, and was a roving evangelist, preaching with great success in Whitefield's London Tabernacle, in Bristol, Bath, and all over the west of England. At the commencement of the controversy, Berridge wrote to him thus: "The late contest at Bristol seems to turn upon this hinge, whether it shall be *Pope John* or *Pope Joan*. My dear friend, keep out of all controversy, and wage no war but with the devil."[2] Unfortunately for himself, the young preacher did not follow the counsel of the vicar of Everton, but, in 1772, issued an octavo pamphlet of 71 pages, entitled "Friendly Remarks occasioned by the Spirit and Doctrines contained in the Rev. Mr. Fletcher's Vindication, and more particularly in his Second Check to Antinomianism, to which is added a Postscript, occasioned by his Third Check." The production is what might be expected from YOUNG Rowland Hill. Fletcher is accused of using "tartness of style," "banter," "contempt," "numberless sneers, taunts, and sarcasms;" "infernal terms of darkness," "bravado," "slander," "high flown metaphors," "frothy declamation," "odious appellations," "glaring inconsistencies," "palpable mistakes." He says, "Wesley has been a proverb for his contradictions for above thirty years."

[1] Toplady writes, November 27, 1772: "I am informed, that inveterate troubler in Israel, Mr. John Wesley, has lately published a fourth squib against Mr. Hill. What a mercy it is, that the enemies of the gospel, amidst all their plenitude of malice, have little skill and less power! Mr. Wesley, considered as a reasoner, is one of the most contemptible writers that ever set pen to paper!" (Toplady's Posthumous Works, 8vo, 1780, p. 330.)

[2] Rowland Hill's Life, p. 428.

1772 Age 69 The "Hymns on God's Everlasting Love," "formerly sent forth from the Foundery," are stigmatised as "certain godly lampoons of famous memory." This was pretty strong to come from a stripling not yet ordained.

His brother also was not a laggard. Without loss of time, he published an octavo volume of 151 pages, with the following gigantic title: "A Review of all the Doctrines taught by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley; containing a full and particular Answer to a Book entitled 'A Second Check to Antinomianism.' In six Letters to the Author of that Book; wherein the Doctrines of a twofold Justification, Free Will, Man's Merit, Sinless Perfection, Finished Salvation, and Real Antinomianism are particularly discussed, and the Puritan Divines vindicated from the Charges brought against them of holding Mr. Wesley's Doctrines. To which is added, a Farrago of Hot and Cold Medicines. By the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, Author of the 'Preservative against Unsettled Notions in Religion.' Extracted from his own Publications."

Richard Hill's scurrility is quite equal to his brother's. He writes: "O my dear sir, I never could have supposed that sneer, banter, and sarcasm, yea, notorious falsehoods, calumny, and gross perversions, would have appeared under the sanction of your venerable name." He tells Fletcher that he "dips his pen in gall," and "maintains his cause by artful insinuations." "In your first letter," says he, "I really cannot find many lines together free from gross misrepresentations and perversions, and hardly one single paragraph exempt from cutting sneers and low sarcasms." "Your pages," he adds, "are as totally void of solid Scripture argument as they are replete with calumny, gross perversions and equivocations." Wesley is treated with the same bitterness as Fletcher. "His opinions" are said to be "a mixture of Pelagianism, semi-Pelagianism, Arminianism, popery, mysticism, and quakerism." Such quotations might be multiplied *ad nauseam;* but the reader has had enough. Suffice it to add, that, before the year 1772 was ended, the public was blessed with "a second, corrected and enlarged edition" of this loving effusion of the Salopian baronet.

Besides all this, Sir Richard published, in 1772, another octavo pamphlet of 16 pages, with the title, "Some Remarks

on a Pamphlet entitled A Third Check to Antinomianism," a production brief, but, like the rest, far too rancorous. Scurrility is almost a sure sign of feeble arguments and a defenceless cause. 1772 Age 69

The two Hills were not Wesley's only antagonists. Toplady issued his "More Work for Mr. John Wesley; or, a Vindication of the Decrees and Providence of God from the Defamations of a late printed paper, entitled 'The Consequence Proved.'" 8vo, 104 pages: 1772.[1]

In his advertisement, Toplady tells his readers, that he bears not the least ill will to Wesley; and that his manuscript had lain by him for several weeks, "merely with a view of striking out, from time to time, whatever might savour of undue asperity and intemperate warmth." The following extracts will show how far Toplady succeeded in his pious and loving wish.

"Mr. Wesley has as much of the *insidious* in his composition, as he has of the *acid;* and it would be difficult to say which predominates." "He is for adding the lion to the fox. He wishes not only to wheedle, but to *thunder* the Church out of her Calvinism. He is, like Mahommed, for propagating his religion by the sword. Peals of anathemas are issued, and torrents of the lowest calumny are thrown out, against all who abide by the thirty-nine articles. Pope John's authority may have some weight with such men as Messrs. Walter Sellon, Haddon Smith, and Thomas Olivers; but not an inch beyond the purlieus of ignorance, prejudice, and superstition will his dictatorship extend." "His mode of phraseology is as pregnant with craft as his conduct is destitute of honour. He first *hatches* blasphemy, and then *fathers* it on others." "His forehead must be *petrified,* and quite impervious to a blush." "He sits down, and deliberately *writes* a known, wilful, palpable lie

[1] Besides the above, there were also published, at this period, the two following pamphlets, by Jonathan Warne, of Southwark: "Arminianism, the Back Door to Popery:" price one shilling. And "The Downfall of Arminianism; or Arminians tried and cast, before the Right Honourable the Lord Chief Justice Truth, for holding and propagating false opinions concerning the five following points, viz.: (1) Absolute election; (2) Particular redemption; (3) The efficacy of God's grace in conversion; (4) The impotency of man's will in conversion; (5) The final perseverance of the regenerate." 8vo, 145 pages.

1772 Age 69 to the public." "He is a pitiful nibbler at the file he cannot bite." "Thomas Olivers, a *journeyman shoemaker*, retained by Mr. Wesley as a lay preacher at the rate of £10 per annum, is his bully in chief. *In chief*, did I say? I had forgot the Rev. Mr. Walter Sellon; prunella claims precedency of leather; *Thomas* is only *second* in commission. Mr. Wesley skulks for shelter under a cobbler's apron." "Has Tom, the shoemaker, more *learning*, or more *integrity*, than John the priest?" "Without the least heat or emotion, I plainly say, Mr. Wesley *lies*."[1]

The following is part of Mr. Toplady's concluding paragraph.

"One word to Mr. Wesley himself, and I have done. Time, sir, has already whitened your locks; and the hour must shortly come, which will transmit you to the tribunal of that God, on whose sovereignty a great part of your life has been one continued assault. At that bar *I* too must hold up *my* hand. Omniscience only can tell, *which* of us shall first appear before the Judge of all. I shortly *may*, you shortly *must*. The part you have been permitted to act in the religious world will, sooner or later, sit heavy on your mind. Depend upon it, a period will arrive when the Father's *electing* mercy and the Messiah's adorable *righteousness*, will appear in *your* eyes, even in yours, to be the only safe anchorage for a dying sinner. I mean, unless you are actually given over to final obduration; which, I trust, you are not; and to which, I most ardently beseech God, you never may."

Poor young Augustus Toplady, now thirty-one years of age, after doing his utmost to purge his pamphlet from offensive expressions, thus, by the electing grace of God, speaks of a man approaching seventy. Little did he think, that within seven years he himself would stand before that bar with which he threatened Wesley; and that the hoary headed man, who he thought might be "given over to final obduration," would be his survivor nearly thirteen years.

Besides all this public annoyance, Wesley and Fletcher had sent to them anonymous letters of the vilest description. Two may suffice as specimens. Both have Birmingham post mark, and both were addressed to Fletcher. Both are in the same handwriting; the orthography of one is correct, but of the other *purposely* otherwise. In the first are ink sketches of Wesley and Fletcher in two pulpits, and pelting each

[1] The *italic* words are emphasized in the original.

other with Bibles. In the other, Wesley is represented as being hanged, and Fletcher is shooting him after he is dead. Take an extract from the first, which, though bad enough, is not the worst that it contains. 1772 Age 69

"I HAVE sent you a short poem upon parson Wesley.

'There wos a man, Hold Wesley by name,
I rother think yo'll bee thee same,
From every porsun he gets tuppence a week—
I wish hee was hear, and I'd give him a kick.
He open'd a meeting Inn this town,
And all the benchees dyd fall doun,
I was in the meeting at the same tyme,
But O I cannot find a rheime.
You preach'd a Charrity sermun wonce,
And sat in the pulpit like old Punch.'"

What had Wesley done to deserve all this? Literally nothing, except publishing the brief and imperfect minutes of a conversation he had with his itinerant preachers in 1770, on the subject of Calvinism; and, further, three small tracts, one an abridgment of Toplady's Zanchius; another an answer to the question, "What is an Arminian?" and the third, "The Consequence Proved." This was absolutely the sum total of his offence so far as the public was concerned. The minutes fill little more than an octavo page, and contain not the slightest reflection upon any one under heaven. The description of an Arminian occupies only eight pages 12mo, and merely states, in the most temperate terms, the difference between the Arminian and Calvinistic creeds. From first to last, the name of no living man is mentioned, except the name of Wesley himself. The abridgment of Toplady's Zanchius fills only twelve pages 12mo, and is honestly and fairly made. The only thing in it, that can, with any degree of fairness, be considered personal, is the summing up of the principles of Zanchius, which occupy half-a-dozen lines, and to which Wesley appended the words, characteristic enough of the young predestinarian whose translation he was abridging, "Reader, believe this, or be damned. Witness my hand, A— T—." Then, in reference to the third tract, "The Consequence Proved," the printed matter fills just eight pages 12mo, and there is absolutely nothing in it but what is fair argument, except that Wesley calls Toplady "a young, bold man," and

1772 Age 69 says he will leave him "to be farther corrected by one that is full his match, Mr. Thomas Olivers." This is all, literally all; the first and last; the substance and the details of Wesley's offending. The two Hills, one of them not yet forty, and the other not yet thirty years of age, are never mentioned, or in the least alluded to, in any of Wesley's publications just named. And yet, because an old man, who, for more than thirty years, had been incessantly traversing the three kingdoms to preach the gospel of God his Saviour, happens to express, in the most temperate language, an opinion contrary to the Calvinian creed, he becomes the butt of the disgraceful abuse, specimens of which have been given in the previous pages. For many a long year, Wesley was lampooned in newspapers and magazines, and in tracts and pamphlets written by two different classes of literary men—Samuel Foote, the comedian, the representative of one, and George Lavington, the merryandrew bishop, the representative of the other: but now these were silent; and, in their stead, we have another set of opponents, far more angry than the former ones, animated by a spirit quite as bitter, and using opprobrious epithets almost more offensive; men believing themselves to be among God's elect, called, and converted; loud religious professors, and adepts in the art of railing; profound admirers of the dead Whitefield, but perfect haters of Whitefield's surviving friend, Wesley. In turn, Wesley had encountered mobs and men of letters, drunken parsons, furious papists, honest infidels, and others; but, of all his enemies, his last were his bitterest and worst, Calvinistic Christians!!

Some will blame the writer for furnishing modern readers with specimens of the foul mouthed language used, respecting Wesley, by some of the most flaming professors of Christ's religion a hundred years ago. His answer is, the task is far from pleasant; but without a knowledge of Wesley's unmerited and unparalleled persecutions, who can have a just conception of Wesley's character? The result of such exposures, it is true, is not only to enhance the fame of Wesley, but to blot the history of his opponents. This no one regrets more deeply than the present writer; but he cannot help it. Besides, it is a fact, which cannot be denied, that there are some sins which, even though repented of, and

pardoned, are, in the present world, always punished. A man rails, and God forgives him; but even forgiveness cannot prevent his railing injuring his character. Injured fame, in such a case, is a penalty unavoidable, reasonable, and right. 1772 Age 6

We have furnished specimens of the foolish and disgraceful ravings of Richard and Rowland Hill. What was Wesley's reply? There is a quiet irony in one of the entries in his journal, which is worth quoting: "1772. July 11—I was presented with Mr. Hill's Review, a curiosity in its kind. But it has nothing to do either with good nature or good manners; for he is writing to an Arminian. I almost wonder at his passionate desire to measure swords with me. This is the third time he has fallen upon me without fear or wit. *Tandem extorquebis ut vapules.*"

Accordingly, Wesley prepared and published "Some Remarks on Mr. Hill's 'Review of all the Doctrines taught by Mr. John Wesley.'" This is the tartest of Wesley's publications, and not without reason. He writes:

"Mr. Fletcher imagined that his opponents would have received his words in the same spirit wherein they were spoken; but they turn them all into poison. He not only loses his sweet words, but they are turned into bitterness, are interpreted as mere sneer and sarcasm! A good lesson for me! I had designed to have transcribed Mr. Fletcher's character of Mr. Hill,[1] and to have added a little thereto, in hope of softening his spirit; but I see it is in vain; as well might one hope to soften

'Inexorable Pluto, king of shades!'

"Since he is capable of putting such a construction, even upon Mr. Fletcher's gentleness and mildness, what will he not ascribe to me? I have done, therefore, with humbling myself to these men,—to Mr. Hill and his associates; I have humbled myself to them for these thirty years, but will do it no more. I have done with attempting to soften their spirits; it is all lost labour. Upon men of an ingenuous temper I have been able to fix an obligation. Bishop Gibson, Dr. Church, and even Dr. Taylor, were obliged to me for not pushing my advantage. But it is not so with these; whatever mercy you show, you are to expect no mercy from them. 'Mercy,' did I say? Alas! I expect no justice; no more than I have found already. As they have wrested and distorted my words from the beginning, so I expect they will do to the end. Mr. Hill's performance is a specimen. Such mercy, such justice, I am to expect!

[1] Sir Richard Hill did not obtain his title till the death of his father, in 1783.

1772 Age 69 For forty or fifty years, I have been a little acquainted with controversial writers; some of the Romish persuasion, some of our own Church, some Dissenters of various denominations; and I have found many among them as angry as he; but one so bitter I have not found. As a writer, his name is Wormwood."

This was unsheathing the sword, and casting away the scabbard.

Wesley proceeds, in most trenchant style, to defend himself against Hill's grand objection, self inconsistency. Our space renders it impossible to give an outline of Wesley's answers to the charges, so recklessly brought against him. The following is a part of his conclusion:

"I now look back on a train of incidents that have occurred for many months last past, and adore a wise and gracious Providence, ordering all things well! When the circular letter was first dispersed throughout Great Britain and Ireland, I did not conceive the immense good which God was about to bring out of that evil. But no sooner did Mr. Fletcher's first Letters appear than the scene began to open; and the design of Providence opened more and more, when Mr. Shirley's Narrative, and Mr. Hill's Letters, constrained him to write his Second and Third Checks to Antinomianism. It was then indisputably clear, that neither my brother nor I had borne a sufficient testimony to the truth. For many years, from a well meant, but ill judged, tenderness, we had suffered the reprobation preachers (vulgarly called 'gospel preachers') to spread their poison, almost without opposition. But, at length, they have awakened us out of sleep: Mr. Hill has answered for all his brethren, roundly declaring, that 'any agreement with election doubters is a covenant with death.' It is well: we are now forewarned and forearmed. We look for neither peace nor truce with any who do not openly and expressly renounce this diabolical sentiment. But since God is on our side, we will not fear what man can do unto us. We never before saw our way clear, to do any more than act on the defensive. But since the circular letter has sounded the alarm, has called forth all their hosts to war; and since Mr. Hill has answered the call, drawing the sword, and throwing away the scabbard; what remains, but to own the hand of God, and make a virtue of necessity? I will no more desire any Arminian, so called, to remain only on the defensive. Rather chase the fiend, reprobation, to his own hell, and every doctrine connected with it. Let none pity or spare one limb of either speculative or practical antinomianism, or of any doctrine that naturally tends thereto; only remembering that, however we are treated by men, who have a dispensation from the vulgar rules of justice and mercy, we are not to fight them at their own weapons, to return railing for railing. Those who plead the cause of the God of love are to imitate Him they serve; and, however provoked, to use no other weapons than those of truth and love, of Scripture and reason."

Thus did Wesley accept the challenge; and it is not hazarding too much to make the assertion, that Fletcher's almost inimitable polemical productions, and Wesley's own sermons, together with his *Arminian Magazine*, started six years afterwards, did what Wesley wished, namely drove the fiendish doctrine of reprobation to its "own hell," and gave a blow to the Calvinian theory, which has been felt from that time to this. 1772 Age 69

Wesley's other publications, in 1772, were the following.

1. A revised and enlarged edition of the minutes of his conferences.

2. The issue of eleven volumes of his revised and collected works, making a little more than 3900 printed 12mo pages.

3. Two political tracts: one entitled, "Thoughts upon Liberty"; the other, "Thoughts concerning the Origin of Power." The disturbed state of the nation, at this period, has been already sketched. Junius and John Wilkes were the arch agitators of the day, and well-nigh drove the nation into rebellion. Hampson states that, when the Letters of Junius appeared, Wesley offered his services to the government, and proposed to answer them, saying, "I will show the difference between rhetoric and logic."[1] We have no means of either substantiating or contradicting this; but Wesley's "Thoughts upon Liberty" fully show that Wilkes, the demagogue, was no favourite of his, and that King George had no truer or more loyal subject than the leader of the Methodists.

In his second tract, Wesley combats the theory, that the people of a nation are the "origin of power." He shows that, if this were true, every man, woman, and child ought to possess the electoral franchise, and to be allowed to take a part in constituting parliaments and governmental cabinets. He taunts, with withering sarcasm, the advocates of such a theory, on the ground, that they themselves resist the facts their theory implies, because they allowed none to vote except freeholders of forty shillings yearly value, and not even them unless they had arrived at the age of twenty one. "Worse and worse," he writes: "after depriving half the human species of their natural rights for want of a beard; after depriving

[1] Life of Wesley, vol. iii., p. 160.

1772 Age 69 myriads more for want of a stiff beard, for not having lived one-and-twenty years; you rob others of their birthright for want of money! Yet not altogether on this account either; for here is an Englishman who has money enough to buy the estates of fifty freeholders, and yet he must not be numbered among the people because he has not two or three acres of land."

Having shown the absurdities which, as he thinks, the theory involves, he then concludes: "Common sense brings us back to the grand truth, 'There is no power but of God.'"

Wesley's tract is little known; but the radical politicians of the present age would be none the worse for studying the principles to which it summarily adverts.[1]

[1] To understand some of the allusions, in these two political tracts, it is necessary to remember that, in 1772, a petition was presented to parliament, signed by about 250 of the clergy, and a considerable number of the members of the professions of civil law and physic, praying to be relieved from the necessity of subscribing to the thirty-nine articles of the Established Church; and that a bill was passed, in the House of Commons, annulling that part of the Act of Toleration which authorised the infliction of heavy penalties upon the ministers, schoolmasters, and private tutors of Dissenters, unless they subscribed to all the *doctrinal* parts of the thirty-nine articles. The bill passed the Commons triumphantly; the Lords, by a *large majority*, rejected it!

1773.

THE year 1773 will always be memorable in English annals. It was now that the embryo rebellion in the American colonies broke out into overt acts. Insults were offered to the British flag; a British ship of war was boarded and burnt; and the cargoes of tea, which Lord North had allowed to be exported from England, duty free, were seized by rioters and sham Indians, and were discharged into the ocean with the utmost jubilation. Endless debates took place in the English parliament; and fearful fights were fought on the coasts, and in the wilds and prairies of America. George Washington was made commander in chief; and "The Congress of the Thirteen United Colonies" was organised. For long years, the one great absorbing care of the British parliament was the war in the western world. 1773 Age 70

Wesley's health was still seriously affected; and, hence, he spent his leisure hours, in the beginning of 1773, in examining his letters and other manuscripts, so as to determine what he should leave behind him. He writes: "I made an end of revising my letters; and could not but make one remark,—that, for above these forty years, of all the friends who were once the most closely united, and afterwards separated from me, every one had separated himself! He left me, not I him. And from both mine and their own letters, the steps whereby they did this are clear and undeniable."

We have already seen, that Wesley thought of making Fletcher of Madeley his literary executor; but he now did more than this. Hence the following letter, sent to Fletcher in January 1773, and written at Shoreham, doubtless at the venerable Perronet's, with whom Wesley had gone to take counsel.

"DEAR SIR,—What an amazing work has God wrought in these kingdoms, in less than forty years! And it not only continues, but increases, throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland; nay, it has lately spread into New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, and Carolina. But the wise men of the world say, 'When Mr. Wesley drops, then all this is at an end!' And so surely it will, unless, before God calls him hence, one is found to

1773 — Age 70

stand in his place. For Ουκ αγαθον πολυκοιρανια. Εις κοιρανος εστω. I see, more and more, unless there be one προεστως, the work can never be carried on. The body of the preachers are not united; nor will any part of them submit to the rest; so that, either there must be one to preside over all, or the work will indeed come to an end.

"But who is sufficient for these things? qualified to preside both over the preachers and people? He must be a man of faith and love, and one that has a single eye to the advancement of the kingdom of God. He must have a clear understanding; a knowledge of men and things, particularly of the Methodist doctrine and discipline; a ready utterance; diligence and activity, with a tolerable share of health. There must be added to these, favour with the people, with the Methodists in general. For unless God turn their eyes and their hearts toward him, he will be quite incapable of the work. He must, likewise, have some degree of learning; because there are many adversaries, learned as well as unlearned, whose mouths must be stopped. But this cannot be done, unless he be able to meet them on their own ground.

"But has God provided one so qualified? Who is he? *Thou art the man!* God has given you a measure of loving faith; and a single eye to His glory. He has given you some knowledge of men and things; particularly of the whole plan of Methodism. You are blessed with some health, activity, and diligence; together with a degree of learning. And to all these He has lately added, by a way none could have foreseen, favour both with the preachers and the whole people. Come out, then, in the name of God! Come to the help of the Lord against the mighty! Come while I am alive and capable of labour! Come, while I am able, God assisting, to build you up in faith, to ripen your gifts, and to introduce you to the people! *Nil tanti.* What possible employment can you have, which is of so great importance?

"But you will naturally say, 'I am not equal to the task; I have neither grace nor gifts for such an employment.' You say true; it is certain you have not. And who has? But do you not know *Him* who is able to give them? Perhaps not at once, but rather day by day; as each is, so shall your strength be.

"'But this implies,' you may say, 'a thousand crosses, such as I feel I am not able to bear.' You are not able to bear them *now*; and they are not *now* come. Whenever they do come, will *He* not send them in due number, weight and measure? And will they not all be for your profit, that you may be a partaker of His holiness?

"Without conferring, therefore, with flesh and blood, come and strengthen the hands, comfort the heart, and share the labour of your affectionate friend and brother, "JOHN WESLEY."[1]

This was a momentous proposal. Why was it not made to Wesley's brother? We cannot tell; but the following is Fletcher's answer.

[1] Whitehead's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 355.

"MADELEY, *February* 6, 1773. 1773

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I hope the Lord, who has so wonderfully stood by you hitherto, will preserve you to see many of your sheep, and *me* among the rest, enter into rest. Should Providence call you *first*, I shall do my best, by the Lord's assistance, to help *your brother* to gather the wreck, and keep together those who are not absolutely bent upon throwing away the Methodist doctrine or discipline. Every little help will then be necessary; and, I hope, I shall not be backward to throw in my mite. Age 7

"In the meantime, you stand sometimes in need of an assistant to serve tables, and occasionally to fill up a gap. Providence visibly appointed me to that office many years ago; and, though it no less evidently called me here, yet I have not been without doubt, especially for some years past, whether it would not be expedient that I should resume my place as your deacon; not with any view of presiding over the Methodists after you, (God knows!) but to save you a little in your old age, and be in the way of receiving, and perhaps of doing, more good. I have sometimes considered how shameful it was that no clergyman should join you, to keep in the Church the work which the Lord had enabled you to carry on therein; and, as the little estate I have in my native country is sufficient for my maintenance, I have thought I would, one day or other, offer you and the Methodists my *free* services.

"While my love of retirement, and my dread of appearing upon a higher stage than that I stand upon here, made me linger, I was providentially called to do something in Lady Huntingdon's plan; but, being shut out there, it appears to me, I am again called to my first work.

"Nevertheless, I would not leave this place, without a *fuller* persuasion that the time is quite come. Not that God uses me much *now* among my parishioners, but because I have not sufficiently cleared my conscience from the blood of all men, especially with regard to ferreting out the poor, and expostulating with the rich, who make it their business to fly from me. In the meantime, it shall be my employment to beg the Lord to give me light, and make me willing to go anywhere or nowhere, to be anything or nothing.

"I have laid my pen aside for some time; nevertheless, I resumed it last week, at your brother's request, to go on with my treatise on Christian perfection. I have made some alterations in the sheets you have seen, and hope to have a few more ready for your correction, against the time you come this way. How deep is the subject! What need have I of the Spirit, to search the deep things of God! Help me by your prayers, till you can help me by word of mouth.

"I am, reverend and dear sir, your willing, though unprofitable, servant in the gospel, "JOHN FLETCHER."[1]

At the beginning of July, Wesley had an interview with

[1] Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 259.

1773 Age 70 Fletcher at Madeley, and, on reaching London, sent him the following hitherto unpublished letter.

"LEWISHAM, *July* 21, 1773.

"DEAR SIR,—It was a great satisfaction to me, that I had the opportunity, which I so long desired, of spending a little time with you. And I really think it would answer many gracious designs of Providence were we to spend a little more time together. It might be of great advantage both to ourselves and the people, who may otherwise soon be as sheep without a shepherd. You say indeed, 'whenever it pleases God to call me away, you will do all you can to help them.' But will it not then be too late? You may then expect grievous wolves to break in on every side; and many to arise from among themselves, speaking perverse things. Both the one and the other stand in awe of me, and do not care to encounter me; so that I am able, whether they will or no, to deliver the flock into your hands. But no one else is. And it seems, this is the very time when it may be done with the least difficulty. Just now the minds of the people in general are, on account of the Checks, greatly prejudiced in your favour. Should we not discern the providential time? Should we stay till the impression is worn away? Just now, we have an opportunity of breaking the ice, of making a little trial. Mr. Richardson is desirous of making an exchange with you, and spending two or three weeks at Madeley. This might be done either now, or in October, when I hope to return from Bristol. And till something of this kind is done, you will not have that στοργη for the people which alone can make your labour light in spending and being spent for them. Methinks 'tis pity we should lose any time; for what a vapour is life!

"I am, dear sir, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

So the matter ended, though Wesley was far from satisfied. He writes: "I can never believe it was the will of God, that such a burning and shining light should be hid under a bushel. No; instead of being confined to a country village, it ought to have shone in every corner of our land. He was full as much called to sound an alarm through all the nation as Mr. Whitefield himself; nay, abundantly more so; seeing he was far better qualified for that important work. He had a far more striking person; equal good breeding; an equally winning address; together with a richer flow of fancy; a stronger understanding; a far greater treasure of learning, both in languages, philosophy, philology, and divinity; and, above all, a more deep and constant communion with the Father, and with the Son Jesus Christ."[1]

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xi., p. 288.

No wonder that Wesley was anxious for a suitable successor to take his place. The work of which, in the hand of God, he was the principal supporter, had not only spread throughout the three kingdoms, but was rapidly extending beyond the Atlantic. Already he had four of his itinerants in America; and, aged and feeble in health though he was, he still entertained the thought of visiting that distant continent.[1] Among others, the Rev. Mr. Jarratt wrote him, from Virginia, telling him that they had ninety-five parishes in the colony, all, excepting one, supplied with clergymen, but that ninety-three out of the ninety-four ministers appeared to be without "the power and spirit of vital religion." He thanks him for sending his preachers to America, two of whom, Messrs. Pilmoor and Williams, were now labouring in Virginia; but asks, "What can two or three preachers do in such an extended country as this? Cannot you do something more for us? Cannot you send us a minister of the Church of England, to be stationed in the vacant parish? I wish you could see how matters are among us. This would serve instead of a thousand arguments, to induce you to exert yourself in this affair." [2] 1773 Age 70

Even this was not all. During the year, Francis Gilbert wrote to him from Antigua, telling him that "almost the whole island seemed to be stirred up to seek the Lord." There were large congregations and constant preaching in his brother's house; and they had, at St. John's, a society of twenty whites and forty blacks. "Here," says Mr. Gilbert, "is work enough for three preachers; as almost the entire island seems ripe for the gospel; yet, I cannot desire you to send them yet, seeing the people are not at present able to bear the expenses; for the fire, the hurricane, and the severe droughts have, I suppose, ruined two thirds of the inhabitants." [3]

Affairs in Scotland were scarcely to Wesley's mind. Writing to John Bredin, at Aberdeen, he says:

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Observe and enforce all our rules exactly as if you were in England, or Ireland. By foolish complaisance our preachers, in Scotland, have often done harm. Be all a Methodist; and strongly insist on *full salvation* to be received *now* by simple *faith*.

"I am yours affectionately, JOHN WESLEY." [4]

[1] Asbury's Journal, vol. i., p. 72. [2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1786, p. 397.
[3] *Methodist Magazine*, 1786, p. 567. [4] *Wesleyan Times*, May 13, 1861.

1773 Age 70

Joseph Benson had been urged to go to America; but Wesley deemed it desirable to send him across the Tweed to put things right in the northern part of the kingdom. "God," says he, "has made practical divinity necessary, and the devil controversial. Sometimes we must write and preach controversially; but the less the better. I think we have few, if any, of our travelling preachers, that love controversy; but there will always be men whose mouth it is necessary to stop; antinomians and Calvinists in particular. By our long silence, we have done much hurt, both to them and the cause of God. The more you preach abroad, the better; keep to the plain, old Methodist doctrine, laid down in the minutes of the conference. At Trevecca, you were a little warped from this; but it was a right hand error. You will be buried in Scotland, if you sell your mare and sit still. Keep her, and ride continually. Sit not still, at the peril of your soul and body! Billy Thompson never satisfied me on this head, not in the least degree. I say still, we will have travelling preachers in Scotland, or none. Our preachers shall either travel there, as in England, or else stay in England."[1]

Such were some of the difficulties which this veteran evangelist had to meet. No wonder that he wished for help.

Chapel debts, also, still pressed heavily upon him. Hence the following to Mr. Hopper.

"*February* 6, 1773.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I agreed last year, though contrary to my judgment, that we would have no more weekly subscriptions. I purposed, likewise, in my own mind, to concern myself with the debt no more. But, upon reflection, it seemed to me, there was one way still, namely, not to apply to the poor at all, (though I would not reject any that offered,) but to take the burden on myself, and try my personal interest with the rich. I began at London, where about £500 are subscribed. Afterwards, I wrote to many in the country. Liverpool circuit has subscribed about £100; Bradford circuit £130. It must be now or never. I do not know that I shall concern myself with this matter any more. Till now we never had a rational prospect of clearing the whole debt in one year. Now it may be done. It certainly will, if our brethren, in other circuits, do as these above mentioned have done. What I desire of you is to second the letters I have wrote, encouraging each man of property in your circuit to exert himself; at least, to send me an answer: this, you know, is but common civility. Now do what you can; and show that you, my old

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., pp. 391, 392.

friend, are not the last and least in love towards your affectionate friend and brother, 1773 Age 70

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

It is now time to trace Wesley's wanderings in 1773.

On Sunday evening, March 7, he set out from London to Ireland, taking, for the first time, his carriage with him, which, however, he was deprived of the opportunity of using. He writes: "March 30—I was a little surprised to find the commissioners of the customs would not permit my chaise to be landed, because, they said, the captain of a packet boat had no right to bring over goods. Poor pretence! However, I was more obliged to them than I then knew; for had it come on shore, it would have been utterly spoiled."

The result was, that Wesley had to hire a chaise instead of riding in his own; a vehicle which at Ballibac ferry went overboard, and, with difficulty, was recovered; and which, on another occasion, it took five hours to drag less than a dozen miles; which, in a third instance, was disabled by the breaking of the hinder axletree; and which, more than once, was in danger of being dashed to pieces by furious mobs.

Everywhere his congregations were large. In many instances, he had whole troops of soldiers to hear him; and nowhere did he meet with any serious disturbance, except at Waterford, where the papists created a riot, in which heavy blows were given; and at Enniskillen, where a mob again and again fell upon the unfortunate carriage, cut it with stones in several places, smashed its windows, and well-nigh covered it with sludge.

Three months were spent in itinerating the sister kingdom. Scores of towns and villages, between Dublin and Galway, Belfast and Cork, were favoured with his ministry; and diversified were the incidents with which he met. At Eyrecourt, the crowd gave him a loud huzza as he passed into the market place to preach. At Clare, for want of other accommodation, he was glad to accept a bed in the soldiers' barracks. At Castlebar, on finding the

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 291.

1773 Age 70 "Charter school a picture of slothfulness, nastiness, and desolation; and all the children, not only dirty, but with their stockings hanging about their heels, and in a most disreputable plight, he reported the facts to the trustees at Dublin, with the hope of effecting a reformation." At Limerick, William Myles, a youth in the seventeenth year of his age, was one of Wesley's hearers, began to meet in class, and, five years afterwards, became an itinerant preacher.[1] At Armagh, he wrote his invaluable sermon "On Predestination," preached it at Londonderry, and, at the request of several of the clergy, published it.[2] At Armagh, also, he heard what he had not heard for fifty years,—an anthem in a church. At Lisburn, all his spare time was taken up by poor patients, who came to him for physic. He writes: "What has fashion to do with physic? Why, in Ireland almost as much as with headdress. Blisters, for anything or nothing, were all the fashion when I was in Ireland last. Now the grand fashionable medicine, for twenty diseases, is mercury sublimate! Why is it not a halter, or a pistol? They would cure a little more speedily."

On the 5th of July, Wesley started for England, having to hold his annual conference in London. He says: "About eleven we crossed Dublin bar, and were at Hoylake the next afternoon. This was the first night I ever lay awake in my life, though I was at ease in body and mind. I believe few can say this: in seventy years I never lost one night's sleep."

Wesley reached the metropolis on the 17th of July; and, on the 21st, made the following entry in his journal: "We had our quarterly meeting at London; at which I was surprised to find, that our income does not yet meet our expense. We were again near £200 bad. My private account I find still worse. I have laboured as much as many writers; and all my labour has gained me, in seventy years, a debt of five or six hundred pounds."

There is some obscurity in this, as will appear from the following correspondence.

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1831, p. 290.
[2] Ibid. 1782, pp. 505, 565.

"To Messrs. THOMAS BALL and ALEXANDER MATHER. 1773

"LEWISHAM, *February* 27, 1772.[1] Age 70

"THE thing which I desire you to do is this, to see that an exact account be kept of all the books in Great Britain and Ireland, printed and sold on my account. You comprehend how many particulars are contained under this general. To do this accurately will require much thought. But you will bear that burden for God's sake, and for the sake of your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

(Reply.)

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I beg to lay before you Mr. Mather's account, sent me by letter of the 18th past, of the gross value of your books, taken in February and March, 1773; viz.:—

	£	s.	d.
"In London, etc.	3754	4	0
Bristol	4253	4	8
Country	2716	1	8
Cash	183	2	11
Debts	23	2	1
	10929	15	4
Stock in February, 1772 . . .	8833	0	7
	£2096	14	9

"Supposed to be owing in March last to printers, binders, etc., £500.

"I am, reverend sir, your most obedient and dutiful servant,

"THOMAS BALL.

"Examined 21st September, 1773:—THOMAS MARRIOTT,
RICHARD KEMP."[2]

According to the above statement, Wesley was in debt to printers and binders to the amount of £500; but, at the same time, he was possessed of books whose gross value was nearly £11,000. How to reconcile the discrepancy we hardly know. The facts are furnished as we find them. One thing is certain, there was something wrong. Some have supposed that Wesley's wife had, by means of false keys, obtained access to the book steward's cash, and helped herself;[3] but of that there is no conclusive proof; and it is certainly neither generous nor just to assert the thing without proving it. All that we know further is, that poor Samuel Franks, the book steward, a man of great uprightness and earnest piety,[4] but naturally of a

[1] Query: ought not this to be 1773?
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1842, p. 1013. [3] Manuscript.
[4] *Methodist Magazine*, 1842, p. 1012.

1773 Age 70 sensitive disposition, within a fortnight, fell into a fit of insanity, and hanged himself.[1] Without mentioning this, Wesley writes: "October 6—The rest of the week I made what inquiry I could into the state of my accounts. Some confusion had arisen from the sudden death of my bookkeeper; but it was less than might have been expected."

Here we must leave the matter. On the supposition that Wesley considered his stock of books not his own, but merely held in trust for the general good, it was quite correct, that, as the result of his literary labours, he was in debt to the amount, as he himself says, "of five or six hundred pounds." In one respect, he was the possessor of a large amount of property; in another, he was actually in debt.

Wesley's conference began in London on August 3. He writes: "August 3—Our conference began. I preached mornings as well as evenings; and it was all one. I found myself just as strong as if I had preached but once a day." Good old simple hearted Samuel Bardsley, then an itinerant of five years' standing, writes, in a manuscript letter now before us: "I never was at a more comfortable conference. We had a deal of love among us. Dear Mr. Wesley laboured hard. I had the pleasure of hearing him preach twelve times. He said, he had not preached so much at a conference these twenty years, and never was more assisted."

It was now that Joseph Bradford was received on trial; and that Thomas Olivers was appointed to be Wesley's travelling companion; honest Bradford taking the place of Olivers a year afterwards, and retaining it for the next eight years. Wesley's effort to extinguish the chapel debts had resulted in a subscription amounting to £2237. Forty-seven preachers were present, and, "in order to lay a foundation for future union," signed the following agreement.

"WE whose names are underwritten, being thoroughly convinced of the necessity of a close union between those whom God is pleased to use as instruments in this glorious work, in order to preserve this union between ourselves, are resolved, God being our helper,—

"I. To devote ourselves entirely to God: denying ourselves, taking up our cross daily, steadily aiming at one thing, to save our own souls, and them that hear us.

[1] Manuscript.

"II. To preach the old Methodist doctrines, and no other, contained in the minutes of the conferences. 1773 Age 7(

"III. To observe and enforce the whole Methodist discipline, laid down in the said minutes."

Wesley had failed in obtaining the consent of Fletcher to be his successor; and, hence, the drawing up and signing of this conferential compact.

On the first Sunday night, after the conference concluded, Wesley set out, by coach, on his accustomed tour to Cornwall, which occupied the next three weeks.

In returning, he spent a month at Bristol, and among the societies round about. On October 6, he started in his chaise, at two o'clock in the morning, and, in the evening, arrived in London; thus, in one winter's day, driving in his own conveyance a distance of one hundred and fourteen miles. The rest of October, except the Sundays, was spent in what he calls his "little tours," through the five counties of Bedford, Northampton, Oxford, Buckingham, and Kent.

Ten days, in November, were spent in Norfolk; then he met the London classes; and afterwards went off to Sussex, and then to Kent. The last entry in his year's itinerary is: "London: December 25, and on the following days, we had many happy opportunities of celebrating the solemn feast days, according to the design of their institution. We concluded the year with a fast day, closed with a solemn watch-night." Thus, in observing feast and fast days, ended the year 1773. One of these, of course, was Christmas day, another St. Stephen's, a third St. John's, and a fourth the Innocents' day. To some it may seem strange, that Wesley, the Methodist, should observe such festivals as these; but, in such matters, Wesley was still the Churchman. Besides, throughout life, it was one of his most sacred delights to think, not only of the living, but likewise of the dead. On the 12th of June, in this very year of 1773, he wrote a letter, an extract from which is worth preserving.

"It has, in all ages, been allowed, that the communion of saints extends to those in paradise, as well as those on earth, as they are all one body united under one Head; and

'Can death's interposing tide
Spirits one in Christ divide?'

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"But it is difficult to say, either what kind, or what degree of union, may be between them. It is not improbable, their fellowship with us is far more sensible than ours with them. Suppose any of them are present, they are hid from our eyes, but we are not hid from their sight. They, no doubt, clearly discern all our words and actions, if not all our thoughts too. For it is hard to think these walls of flesh and blood can intercept the view of an angelic being. But we have, in general, only a faint and indistinct perception of their presence, unless in some peculiar instances, where it may answer some gracious ends of Divine Providence. Then it may please God to permit, that they should be perceptible, either by some of our outward senses, or by an internal sense, for which human language has not a name. But I suppose this is not a common blessing. I have known but few instances of it. To keep up constant and close communion with God is the most likely mean to obtain this also."[1]

Up to the present, nothing has been said concerning the progress, in 1773, of the Calvinian controversy. Fletcher's pen was not idle, but the only works he published were: first, "An Appeal to Matter of Fact and Common Sense; or, a Rational Demonstration of Man's Corrupt and Lost Estate," 12mo, 296 pages; and, secondly, "A Dreadful Phenomenon Described and Improved, being a Particular Account of the Earthquake at Madeley, on May 27, 1773:" 12mo, 104 pages. Neither of these, however, had any immediate bearing on the matters in dispute.

On the other side, good old Berridge, of Everton, brought out his "Christian World Unmasked"; which, if full of faults, is, at all events, free from dulness; a book, like its author, often odd, sometimes coarse, but always pious; full of genius, and full of goodness; seasoned with Calvinism's highest flavour, but entirely free from the personal scurrility so characteristic of others.

Toplady sent nothing to the press; but his private letters were as full of bitterness as ever. "I am told," he writes, "that Mr. Fletcher has it in contemplation to make an attack on me. He is welcome. I am ready for him. Tenderness has no effect on Mr. Wesley and his pretended *family of love*. For my own part, I shall never attempt to hew such millstones with a feather. They must be served as nettles; press them close, and they cannot sting. Cobbler *Tom* laments publicly, from his preaching tub (misnamed a pulpit), that such an

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1805, p. 520.

antinomian as myself should have such crowded auditories, while the preachers of the *pure gospel* (by which he means *free will*, *merit*, and *perfection*) are so thinly attended. The envy, malice, and fury of Wesley's party are inconceivable. But, as violently as they hate *me*, I dare not, I cannot hate *them* in return. I have not so learned Christ. Your idea of Mr. John Wesley and his associates exactly tallies with mine. Abstracted from all warmth, and from all prejudice, I believe him to be the most rancorous hater of the gospel system that ever appeared in England. I except not Pelagius himself. The latter had some remains of modesty, and preserved some appearances of decency; but the former has outlived all pretentions to both."[1] 1773 Age 70

Could this impulsive reviler be actually sincere, when he said he durst not, and could not, hate Wesley and his party?

Toplady, so far as printing was concerned, was silent; but Richard Hill begun the year as vigorously as ever, by publishing his "Finishing Stroke; containing some Strictures on the Rev. Mr. Fletcher's pamphlet, entitled, 'Logica Genevensis, or a Fourth Check to Antinomianism:'" 8vo, 57 pages. This characteristic piece is dated January 2, 1773. The author confesses, that he had formed a resolution to be silent; but "Logica Genevensis" was too provoking to be passed in silence. This, however, was to be the real "finishing stroke." Sir Richard writes: "the unfair quotations you have made, and the shocking misrepresentations and calumnies you have been guilty of, will, for the future, prevent me from looking into any of your books, if you should write a thousand volumes. So here the controversy must end; at least, it shall end for me."

Poor Sir Richard! Such was his resolve; and yet, almost before the printer's ink was dry, his godly impetuosity sent forth another octavo pamphlet, of the same size as the former one, entitled "Logica Wesleiensis; or the Farrago Double Distilled. With an heroic Poem in Praise of Mr. John Wesley:" 63 pages. Hill, as usual, is angry and vindictive. He tells his readers, that he had never seen Wesley "above four or five times in his life; once in the pulpit at West Street chapel;

[1] Toplady's Posthumous Works, 1780, pp. 343-346.

1773 Age 70 once at a friend's house; and once or twice at his own lodgings in Vine Street." He writes: "I find it just as easy to catch an eel by the tail, as to lay hold of Mr. Wesley for one single moment. Oh, what quirks, quibbles, and evasions does this gentleman descend to, in order to shift off his own inconsistencies!" As a specimen of the writer's "heroic poem," we give the following.

"A choice *Preservative* I have,
The like was never known;
With potions, juleps, drops, and pukes,
Peculiarly my own.

Help *Cobbler* Tom, and thou Swiss friend,
To lay John Calvin's ghost;
For what with *cynics*, *bigots*, *bears*,
I fear the day is lost.

We three shall incantations raise,
With *thunderings*, lightnings, hail;
And if the hobgoblin won't avaunt,
I'll bring my comet's tail."

Sir Richard was not content with this. During the year, he published another octavo pamphlet, of 30 pages, with the wordy title, "Three Letters written by Richard Hill, Esq., to the Rev. J. Fletcher, vicar of Madeley, setting forth Mr. Hill's Reasons for declining any further Controversy relative to Mr. Wesley's Principles."

He states, that he has heard that Fletcher "wishes to have done with controversy;" and upon the strength of this, he has written to his London bookseller to stop the sale of his own publications. He begs pardon for "whatever may have savoured too much of his own spirit"; and says, restraint should be put upon several of Wesley's preachers, "particularly upon one Perronet, of whose superlatively abusive and insolent little piece Charles Wesley had testified his abhorrence from the pulpit." He wishes Wesley to be made acquainted with the action he has taken, and says: "If I stop the sale of my books, I hope that of the Four Checks will be stopped also." He adds, that his mother's death had recently taken place; and then, at the end of his pamphlet, gives "a proposed title" to Fletcher's works, and also "A Creed for Arminians and Perfectionists"; the latter signed by "J. F., J. W., and W. S."

Such is the substance of the three letters, which, in the first instance, were sent to Fletcher privately, and were not intended for publication. By some means, however, the fact of the letters having been written became bruited abroad, and certain hasty logicians deduced the unauthorised inference, that Sir Richard had recanted his Calvinian doctrines. This was too bitter a pill to be swallowed; and, hence, the writer, who was weary of the war, gave his private letters to the public, and attached to them a preface which had better not been penned. 1773 Age 70

For instance, he speaks of Thomas Olivers as "a journeyman cordwainer, who had written a pamphlet against him, which, though in itself *black of the grain*, was afterwards *lacquered up*, *new soled*, and *heel tapped* by his master, before it was exposed to sale." He adds: "I shall not take the least notice of him, or read a line of his composition, any more than, if I was travelling, I would stop to lash, or even order my footman to lash, every impertinent little quadruped in a village, that should come out and bark at me; but would willingly let the contemptible animal have the satisfaction of thinking he had driven me out of sight."

He then proceeds to accuse Fletcher of "misrepresenting facts," and of using "artifices, false glosses, pious frauds, declamation, chicanery, and evasion, to throw dust into the eyes of his readers;" and concludes, by saying, that though he cannot read any more of the productions of Fletcher's pen, and, therefore, cannot write replies to them, yet, notwithstanding all in his letters to the contrary, he shall still keep on sale his "Paris Conversation"; his "Five Letters"; his "Review of Wesley's Doctrines"; his "Logica Wesleiensis"; and his "Finishing Stroke."

Such was the position of Sir Richard Hill in 1773. He wished for peace. Why? Because he was vanquished.

What action did Wesley take? On the 1st of April was published, "Some Remarks on Mr. Hill's Farrago Double Distilled. By John Wesley."[1] 12mo, 44 pages.

Wesley's "Remarks" are characterised by his wonted keenness, courtesy, wit, and brevity. In conclusion, he writes:

[1] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, April 2, 1773.

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"I beg leave, in my turn, to give you a few advices. 1. Be calm. Do not venture into the field again till you are master of your temper. 2. Be good natured. Passion is not commendable; but ill nature still less. 3. Be courteous. Show good manners, as well as good nature, to your opponent, of whatever kind. 4. Be merciful. When you have gained an advantage over your opponent, do not press it to the uttermost. Remember the honest quaker's advice to his friend a few years ago: 'Art thou not content to lay John Wesley upon his back, but thou wilt tread his guts out?' 5. In writing, do not consider yourself as a man of fortune, or take any liberty with others on that account. Men of sense simply consider what is written; not whether the writer be a lord or a cobbler. 6. Lastly, Remember, 'for every idle word men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgment.' Remember, 'by thy words shalt thou be justified; or by thy words shalt thou be condemned.'"

Wesley's other publications, in 1773, were nine 12mo volumes of his collected works, making together 3439 pages. In these were included five small works, now first published: namely,—1. "An Extract of Two Discourses on the Conflagration and Renovation of the World: written by James Knight, D.D., late Vicar of St. Sepulchre, London;" in which, by the way, a theory is propounded antagonistic to the millenarian theory, which Wesley countenanced some years before. 2. "An Extract from a Treatise concerning Religious Affections: by the late Rev., Jonathan Edwards.,' 3. "A Short Account of John Dillon." 4. "Instructions for Members of Religious Societies." 5. "Christian Reflections. Translated from the French." These "Reflections" are three hundred and thirty-six in number. We give one as a specimen of the rest. "The three greatest punishments which God can inflict on sinners, in this world, are: 1. To let loose their own desires upon them. 2. To let them succeed in all they wish for. And, 3. To suffer them to continue many years in the quiet enjoyment thereof."

Besides the above, Wesley also published "A Short Roman History." 12mo, 155 pages.

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REFERENCES have been made to the state of Wesley's health. His labours had been undiminished, and yet many of his friends had been anxious and alarmed. John Pawson, in an unpublished letter, dated Bristol, October 14, 1773, remarks: "Mr. Wesley has been with us for some time. He seems to be declining very fast; and I think there is great reason to fear that he will not be with us long." There was sufficient cause for solicitude. Wesley's pain, during the last three years, must have been acute; and it is perfectly marvellous how he managed, without a murmur, and without abatement, to do the whole of his accustomed work. At the beginning of 1774, the matter reached its crisis. He writes: 1774 Age 71

"January 4—Three or four years ago, a stumbling horse threw me forward on the pommel of the saddle. I felt a good deal of pain; but it soon went off, and I thought of it no more. Some months after, I observed *testiculum alterum altero duplo majorem esse.* I consulted a physician; he told me it was a common case, and did not imply any disease at all. In May twelvemonth, it was grown near as large as a hen's egg. Being then at Edinburgh, Dr. Hamilton insisted on my having the advice of Drs. Gregory and Munro. They immediately saw it was a hydrocele, and advised me, as soon as I came to London, to aim at a radical cure, which they judged might be effected in about sixteen days. When I came to London, I consulted Mr. Wathen. He advised me—(1) Not to think of a radical cure, which could not be hoped for, without my lying in one posture fifteen or sixteen days; and he did not know whether this might not give a wound to my constitution, which I should never recover. (2) To do nothing while I continued easy. And this advice I was determined to take. Last month, the swelling was often painful. So on this day Mr. Wathen performed the operation, and drew off something more than half a pint of a thin, yellow, transparent water. With this came out, to his no small surprise, a pearl of the size of a small shot; which he supposed might be one cause of the disorder, by occasioning a conflux of humours to the part."

Such is Wesley's own simple statement. The disease was unquestionably a serious one; and, yet, it is a surprising fact, that, only a week after the surgical operation, he was again

1774 Age 71 in harness, and as actively employed as ever. Hence the following: "Tuesday, January 11—I began, at the east end of the town, to visit the society from house to house. I know no branch of the pastoral office which is of greater importance than this. But it is so grievous to flesh and blood, that I can prevail on few, even of our preachers, to undertake it."

Wesley's zeal for the extension of his Saviour's kingdom would hardly let him rest when rest was requisite. His long life was an unbroken scene of gigantic action. He worked as though nothing could be done without his working; and yet no man more practically acknowledged, that all his work, without God's blessing, would amount to nothing. Hence, not only his own ceaseless prayers for the help and co-operation of his great Master, but also his appointment of fast days to be observed by the thousands of his followers. Many of these are mentioned in his journals, but many were observed without being mentioned. One of these occurred at the time of which we are now writing. "Yesterday," says Samuel Bardsley, on January 25, 1774, "yesterday I got a letter from Mr. Wesley, informing me that the 28th instant is to be observed as a day of fasting and prayer for the prosperity of the gospel."[1] Numbers of such days were appointed. No wonder Wesley prospered.

The first two months of 1774 were chiefly spent in London; and, on March 6, Wesley set out on his northern visitation, which, as usual, occupied his time till the conference was held in August. This journey has been so often traversed, that we shall no longer follow Wesley, step by step; but merely advert to its chief incidents.

At Wolverhampton he was met by his friend Fletcher, of Madeley, and says: "March 22—At five in the morning I explained that important truth, that God trieth us every moment, weighs all our thoughts, words, and actions, and is pleased or displeased with us, according to our works. I see more and more clearly, that there is a great gulf fixed between us and all those, who, by denying this, sap the very foundation both of inward and outward holiness."

[1] Manuscript letter.

When he had travelled as far as Congleton, he received intelligence which compelled him to retrace his steps, and go back to Bristol. The entry in the journal of this old man of more than seventy is a curiosity. "Wednesday, March 30—I went on to Congleton, where I received letters, informing me that my presence was necessary at Bristol. So, about one, I took chaise, and reached Bristol about half an hour after one the next day. Having done my business in about two hours, on Friday in the afternoon I reached Congleton again, about a hundred and forty miles from Bristol, no more tired (blessed be God!) than when I left it." This is marvellous. Here we have a septuagenarian, in feeble health, travelling, not by railway, nor yet by coach, but in his own private chaise, in a wintry month, and on roads not macadamised, a distance of two hundred and eighty miles in about eight-and-forty hours, and then quietly sitting down and, without bombast, but with profound gratitude, recording the fact in the language above given. Can biography furnish a parallel to this? We doubt it. 1774 Age 71

On Easter day, April 3, Wesley writes: "I went on to Macclesfield, and came just in time (so is the scene changed here) to walk to the old church, with the mayor and the two ministers."

Here we pause, to notice a man, who afterwards, not only distinguished himself by his pen and ministerial labours, but became one of Wesley's sincerest and warmest friends.

One of the "two ministers," referred to in this extract, was David Simpson, now a young man of twenty-eight. Born at Ingleby Arncliffe, in Yorkshire, and educated at Northallerton, and at Scorton, he, in 1766, entered St. John's college, Cambridge, where he became acquainted with Rowland Hill, and a select society of devout collegians, and was converted. On leaving college, he was ordained, and accepted the curacy of Ramsden in Essex. He then removed to Buckingham, where, by his extempore preaching of justification by faith, and the nature and necessity of the new birth, he provoked alike the hostility of the surrounding clergy and the sneers of unconverted laics. About the year 1772, he accepted the invitation of Charles Roe, Esq., to his residence at Macclesfield, and soon became curate of what Wesley calls "the old church," but which, at that period, was the only church that Maccles-

1774 Age 71 field possessed. Here he married Miss Waldy, of Yarm, a young lady of distinguished excellence and piety, who died within six months after Wesley's visit, leaving to her young husband the care of an infant daughter. Mr. Simpson's faithful ministry was as much disliked at Macclesfield as it had been at Buckingham. Complaints of his Methodism were made to his diocesan, and twice he was suspended for preaching doctrines, to which, as a clergyman of the Church of England, he had solemnly subscribed. Expelled from the pulpit of the church, he began to preach in the adjacent towns and villages. Just at this juncture, the prime curacy of the church became vacant, and, the nomination being an appendage to the office of the mayor for the time being, Mr. Gould made him the offer, and had the pleasure of seeing it accepted. To prevent Simpson's induction, a petition, with seventeen articles of accusation, was transmitted to the bishop of Chester, all of which might be reduced to one, namely, that he was a Methodist. In reply, he says, in a letter to his lordship: "This is true. My method is to preach the great truths of the gospel, in as plain, and earnest, and affectionate a manner as I am able. Some, hereby, have become seriously concerned about their salvation. The change is soon discovered; they meet with one or another, who invite them to attend the meetings of the Methodists, by which their number" (the Methodists) "is increased to a considerable degree. This is the truth. I own the fact. I confess myself unequal to the difficulty. What would your lordship advise?" Such was the conflict. Before it came to an issue, Mr. Roe, at his own expense, erected a church, of which Mr. Simpson became incumbent in 1775, relinquishing, at the same time, the curacy which had been a bone of contention. Here he continued to exercise his successful ministry until 1799, when he peacefully expired.

Among many others, who were benefited by Simpson's preaching, was a young female, eighteen years of age, who, on the very day of Wesley's visit, above recorded, found peace with God, at Simpson's sacramental service, and afterwards became the Hester Ann Rogers, whose journals and letters have been read by myriads.

On leaving Macclesfield, Wesley proceeded to Manchester and other places. At Bury, Methodism had been cradled in

a storm. On some occasions, the people were besmeared with the most offensive filth; and on others were disturbed in their devotions by a huntsman blowing the hunter's horn. Again and again the vicar frustrated their attempts to erect a chapel; but, at length, land at Pitts o' th' Moor was bought; the poor Methodists dug the clay and burnt the bricks; some worked by day, and others watched by night; and now, in 1774, the building was completed, and, on the 15th of April, Wesley preached in it. 1774 Age 71

Leaving Lancashire for Yorkshire, Wesley had, for him, the unusual honour of preaching on April 17 and 18, in three different churches, at Halifax, Huddersfield, and Heptonstall; and, on the Sunday following, he occupied the same position in the church at Haworth. A few days later, we find him in Scotland, preaching "to a people, the greatest part of whom," says he, "hear much, know everything, and feel nothing." Here, he tells us, he heard sermons, which unfortunately are too common at the present day,—sermons full of truth, "but no more likely to awaken souls than an Italian opera;" and, hence, he himself began to thunder about death, and judgment, and eternity. At Glasgow, Methodist matters were not at all to his satisfaction. "How is it," he asks, "that there is no increase in the society here? It is exceeding easy to answer. One preacher stays here two or three months at a time, preaching on Sunday mornings, and three or four evenings in a week. Can a Methodist preacher preserve either bodily health, or spiritual life, with this exercise? And if he is but half alive, what will the people be?"

At Greenock, he found the same fault; and, at Edinburgh, writes: "Here, likewise, the morning preaching had been given up; consequently the people were few, dead, and cold. Things must be remedied, or we must quit the ground."

Wesley attended a Scotch funeral, with which he was disgusted. "O what a difference," says he, "is there between the English and Scotch method of burial! The English does honour to human nature; and even to the poor remains, that were once the temple of the Holy Ghost! But when I see in Scotland a coffin put into the earth, and covered up without a word, it reminds me of what was spoken of Jehoiakim, 'He shall be buried with the burial of an ass!'"

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At Perth, he says, the generality of the people were so wise, that they needed no more knowledge, and so good, that they needed no more religion; and, hence, he gave them three thundering sermons, two of them on hell and the day of judgment.

Wesley's great difficulty in Scotland was the objection to itinerancy. "I have written," says he, in a letter dated October 16, 1774, "to Dr. Hamilton, that Edinburgh and Dunbar must be supplied by one preacher. While I live, itinerant preachers shall be itinerants: I mean, if they choose to remain in connection with me. The society at Greenock are entirely at their own disposal: they may either have a preacher between them and Glasgow, or none at all. But more than one between them they cannot have. I have too much regard both for the bodies and souls of our preachers, to let them be confined to one place any more. I have weighed the matter, and will serve the Scots as we do the English, or leave them." [1]

The above was addressed to Joseph Benson, at this time stationed in Scotland, and who has left a memento of Wesley's visit which is worth quoting. "I was," says he, "constantly with him for a week. I had an opportunity of examining narrowly his spirit and conduct; and, I assure you, I am more than ever persuaded, he is a *none such.* I know not his fellow, first, for abilities, natural and acquired; and, secondly, for his incomparable diligence in the application of those abilities to the best of employments. His lively fancy, tenacious memory, clear understanding, ready elocution, manly courage, indefatigable industry, really amaze me. I admire, but wish in vain to imitate, his diligent improvement of every moment of time; his wonderful exactness even in little things; the order and regularity wherewith he does and treats everything he takes in hand; together with his quick dispatch of business, and calm, cheerful serenity of soul. I ought not to omit to mention, what is very manifest to all who know him, his resolution, which no shocks of opposition can shake; his patience, which no length of trials can weary; his zeal for the glory of God and the good of man, which no waters of per-

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 395.

secution or tribulation have yet been able to quench. Happy man! Long hast thou borne the burden and heat of the day, amidst the insults of foes, and the base treachery of seeming friends; but thou shalt rest from thy labours, and thy works shall follow thee!"[1] 1774 Age 71

On the 10th of June, Wesley reached Newcastle, and, on the day after, set out for Wolsingham and the dales. Returning to Newcastle, he and his wife's daughter, and two grandchildren, had a marvellous escape from danger and death, in which Wesley believed that angels, both good and bad, took part. The narrative cannot be given in fewer or better words than in his own. We merely premise, that Horsley is a village a few miles west of Newcastle; and that Mr. Smith had married Mrs. Wesley's daughter. Wesley writes:

"Monday, June 20—About nine, I set out for Horsley, with Mr. Hopper and Mr. Smith. I took Mrs. Smith, and her two little girls, in the chaise with me. About two miles from the town, just on the brow of the hill, on a sudden both the horses set out, without any visible cause, and flew down the hill, like an arrow. In a minute, John fell off the coach box. The horses then went on full speed, sometimes to the edge of the ditch on the right, sometimes on the left. A cart came up against them; they avoided it as exactly as if the man had been on the box. A narrow bridge was at the foot of the hill. They went directly over the middle of it. They ran up the next hill with the same speed; many persons meeting us, but getting out of the way. Near the top of the hill was a gate, which led into a farmer's yard. It stood open. They turned short, and ran through it, without touching the gate on one side, or the post on the other. I thought, 'The gate which is on the other side of the yard, and is shut, will stop them'; but they rushed through it, as if it had been a cobweb, and galloped on through the cornfield. The little girls cried out, 'Grandpapa, save us!' I told them, 'Nothing will hurt you: do not be afraid'; feeling no more fear or care than if I had been sitting in my study. The horses ran on, till they came to the edge of a steep precipice. Just then Mr. Smith, who could not overtake us before, galloped in between. They stopped in a moment. Had they gone on ever so little, he and we must have gone down together!"

This was one of the narrowest escapes from death that Wesley ever had; and his remarks upon it are worth adding.

"I am persuaded, that both evil and good angels had a large share in this transaction: how large we do not know now; but we shall know

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1825, p. 386.

1774 Age 71 hereafter. I think some of the most remarkable circumstances were: (1) Both the horses, which were tame and quiet as could be, starting out in a moment, just at the top of the hill, and running down full speed. (2) The coachman's being thrown on his head with such violence, and yet not hurt at all. (3) The chaise running again and again to the edge of each ditch, and yet not into it. (4) The avoiding the cart. (5) The keeping just the middle of the bridge. (6) The turning short through the first gate, in a manner that no coachman in England could have turned them, when in full gallop. (7) The going through the second gate as if it had been but smoke, without slackening their pace at all. This would have been impossible, had not the end of the chariot pole struck exactly on the centre of the gate; whence the whole, by the sudden impetuous shock, was broken into small pieces. Lastly, that Mr. Smith struck in just then: in a minute more we had been down the precipice. 'Let those give thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed, and delivered from the hand of the enemy!'"

Newcastle was one of Wesley's favourite haunts. However cruelly his wife treated him, her daughter and her son in law, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, always seem to have shown him kindness; and hence, he always appeared to quit Newcastle with reluctance. He writes: "June 27—I took my leave of this lovely place and people." The next day was his birthday, which he celebrated as follows: "This being the first day of my seventy-second year, I was considering, How is this, that I find just the same strength as I did thirty years ago? that my sight is considerably better now, and my nerves firmer, than they were then? that I have none of the infirmities of old age, and have lost several I had in my youth? The grand cause is, the good pleasure of God, who doeth whatsoever pleaseth Him. The chief means are: (1) My constantly rising at four, for about fifty years. (2) My generally preaching at five in the morning; one of the most healthy exercises in the world. (3) My never travelling less, by sea or land, than four thousand five hundred miles a year."

Some will smile at this; but those who think, will hardly doubt, that the three things mentioned, so far from injuring health and shortening life, were among the likeliest of all likely things to be the means of preserving the one and extending the other.

It is scarcely necessary to follow Wesley, in his wanderings through Durham, through the three ridings of the county

of York, and through Lincolnshire; and then right away through Madeley, Worcester, and Cheltenham, to Bristol, where he arrived on August 6. The reader can easily find all this in his journal; we here prefer to give a few extracts from his letters. 1774 Age 71

Reference has just been made to Wesley's vigour. We incline to think that, on his birthday, in the bright month of June, he was sometimes more jubilant than facts warranted. At all events, the following extract from a letter to his brother, written within two months before his birthday came, is scarcely in harmony with what was written then.

"WHITEHAVEN, *May* 6, 1774.

"DEAR BROTHER,—Duty is all I consider. Trouble and reproach I value not. And I am by no means clear, that I can, with a good conscience, throw away what I think the providence of God has put into my hands. Were it not for the chancery suit, I should not hesitate a moment.

"My complaint increases by slow degrees, much the same as before. It seems, I am likely to need a surgeon every nine or ten weeks. Mr. Hey, of Leeds, vehemently advises me, never to attempt what they call a radical cure.

"I never said a word of 'publishing it after my death.'[1] I judged it my duty to publish it now; and I have as good a right to believe one way as any man has to believe another. I was glad of an opportunity of declaring myself on the head. I beg Hugh Bold to let me think as well as himself; and to believe my judgment will go as far as his. I have no doubt of the substance, both of Glanvil's and Cotton Mather's narratives.[2] Therefore, in this point, you that are otherwise minded, bear with me. *Veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.* Remember, I am, upon full consideration, and seventy years' experience, just as obstinate in my opinion as you in yours. Do not you think, the disturbances in my father's house were a Cock Lane story? Peace be with you and yours!

"JOHN WESLEY."[3]

Such was Wesley's reply to his brother's remonstrance against the publication of his opinions on witchcraft and apparitions. The next letter, addressed to a lady in Ireland,

[1] The following probably refers to the ghost stories, in Wesley's Journal, under date May 25, 1768. The fifteenth number of his journal, containing these accounts, was published in this same year, 1774.

[2] Glanvil, the author of "Some Considerations touching the being of Witches and Witchcraft"; and Mather, the author of "The Wonders of the Invisible World, or the Trials of Witches."

[3] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 131.

1774 refers to two important matters,—the Calvinian contro-
Age 71 versy, and Wesley's method of dealing with contumacious Methodists.

"LEEDS, *May* 2, 1774.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—Until Mr. Hill and his associates puzzled the cause, it was as plain as plain could be. The Methodists always held, and have declared a thousand times, the death of Christ is the meritorious cause of our salvation; that is, of pardon, holiness, and glory: loving, obedient faith is the condition of glory. This Mr. Fletcher has so illustrated and confirmed, as, I think, scarcely any one has done before since the apostles.

"When Mr. W. wrote me a vehement letter concerning the abuse he had received from the young men in Limerick, and his determination to put them all out of society, if they did not acknowledge their fault, I much wondered what could be the matter, and only wrote him word, 'I never put any out of our society for anything they say of me.'

"Your ever affectionate

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

The ensuing letters have relation to a book, an abridgment of which Wesley afterwards published, and concerning which some of his admirers have felt puzzled, and others pained. This is not the place for a disquisition on novels and novel reading; but it is a curious fact, that Wesley, the earnest and untiring evangelist, found time, not only to read a novel, but to print it.

Henry Brooke, Esq., an Irish barrister, was the son of an Irish rector; and, besides a number of plays and poems, in four volumes, 8vo, was the author of two novels, "The Fool of Quality," and "Juliet Grenville."[2] His nephew, Henry, was a devoted Methodist, a friend of Fletcher, and one of Wesley's correspondents. "The Fool of Quality" was first published, in five vols., in 1766, and was thus criticised in the *Monthly Review* of that period... "A performance en-

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 373.

[2] Mr. Brooke was three years the junior of Wesley, and, about the time when Methodism had its birth, was the honoured friend of many of the most distinguished personages in London society. Swift prophesied wonders of him; Pope received him with open arms; Pitt paid him marked attention; and the Prince of Wales presented him with valuable tokens of his friendship. The publication however of his tragedy, "Gustavus Vasa," offended the government, and he retired to Ireland, and devoted his fine genius wholly to the muses. He was a man of rare ability, and an earnest Christian.

riched by genius, enlivened by fancy, bewildered with enthusiasm, and overrun with the visionary jargon of fanaticism. We wish the author would give us an abridgment, cleared from the sanctimonious rubbish by which its beauties are so much obscured. In its present state, it will be a favourite only with Behmenites, Herrnhutters, Methodists, Hutchinsonians, and some of the Roman Catholics." 1774 Age 71

This was the book which Wesley read, and concerning which he wrote to Henry Brooke, the author's nephew.

"HULL, *July* 8, 1774.

"DEAR HARRY,—When I read over, in Ireland, 'The Fool of Quality,' I could not but observe the design of it, to promote the religion of the heart, and that it was well calculated to answer that design; the same thing I observed, a week or two ago, concerning 'Juliet Grenville.' Yet, there seemed to me to be a few passages, both in the one and the other, which might be altered for the better; I do not mean, so much with regard to the sentiments, which are generally very just, as with regard to the structure of the story, which seemed here and there to be not quite clear. I had, at first, a thought of writing to Mr. Brooke himself, but I did not know whether I might take the liberty. Few authors will thank you, for imagining you are able to correct their works. But, if he could bear it, and thinks it would be of any use, I would give another reading to both these works, and send him my thoughts without reserve, just as they occur. I am, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

The answer to this was as follows.

"DUBLIN, *August*, 6, 1774.

"REVEREND SIR,—My uncle's health is greatly impaired.[2] A kind of vertigo continues not only to enfeeble his limbs, but to interrupt his study and writing. However, I trust, as his outward man decays, his inward man is renewed daily.

"He is deeply sensible of your very kind offer, and most cordially embraces it. He has desired me to express the warmth of his gratitude in the strongest terms, and says he most cheerfully yields the volumes you mention, to your superior judgment, to prune, erase, and alter as you please. He only wishes they could have had your eye before they appeared in public. But it is not yet too late. A second edition will appear with great advantage, when they have undergone so kind a revisal. But he is apprehensive your time is so precious, that it may be too great an intrusion upon it, unless made a work of leisure and opportunity.

[1] Life of Mr. Henry Brooke, p. 90.

[2] He died in 1783, three years after Wesley published his revised and abridged edition in two vols., 12mo.

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Yet, as you have proffered it, he will not give up the privilege; but hopes leisure may be found for so friendly and generous a work.

"I am, reverend sir, your most affectionate friend and brother,

"H. BROOKE."[1]

Perhaps there have been published as many portraits of Wesley as of any man that ever lived. The year 1774 was, in this respect, remarkable. At its commencement, Wesley writes: "I was desired by Mrs. Wright, of New York, to let her take my effigy in waxwork. She has that of Mr. Whitefield and many others; but none of them, I think, comes up to a well drawn picture." Query, what has become of this waxwork effigy? Besides the waxwork figure, there were others. From the manuscript letters of Samuel Bardsley, we learn that, already, the potters of Staffordshire had printed his likeness on their crockery; and Mr. Voyes of Corbridge had had it engraved on the seals he sold.

These are little facts; but they indicate Wesley's growing popularity. The people ask for the portraits of public men only. A man must be notorious before the masses wish to see him. Thus it was in the case of Wesley. For five-and-thirty years, he had been before the public. No man had been more bitterly persecuted by his enemies; and no man was more ardently beloved by his friends. His fame had spread throughout the three kingdoms; and all sorts of artists began to use him for their own advantage.

Wesley was not fond of sitting for his portrait, though this was often done. On one occasion, while dining with a friend, in the neighbourhood of Blackfriars, an eminent artist offered him ten guineas as a bribe, to induce him to allow a cast of his face to be taken. "No," said Wesley, "keep your money, and urge me no further." "Sir," said the artist, "I will not detain you more than three minutes." Wesley consented; the cast was taken; and so also was the money: but no sooner was Wesley out of doors, than he saw an agitated crowd, surrounding an auctioneer, who was about to sell, not only the furniture of a poor debtor, but the bed upon which he was actually dying. In an instant, Wesley rushed into the throng, seized the arm of the auctioneer, and cried, "What 's the

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1787, p. 160.

debt?" "Ten guineas," was the answer. "Take it," said Wesley, "and let the poor man have his furniture again;" and, then turning to John Broadbent, who was with him, he quietly observed, "Brother Broadbent, I see why God sent me these ten guineas."[1] 1774 Age 71

Methodism in America has been mentioned. The work there was now greatly growing. Twelve months before, Wesley had sent out one of his favourite preachers, Thomas Rankin, to act as a sort of generalissimo. Perhaps a wiser selection might have been made. At all events, Rankin's honest hearted brusqueness sometimes gave offence. Boardman and Pilmoor, and Asbury, were all predecessors in point of time; but they and four other itinerants had now to recognise Rankin as their chief. In age and ministerial standing, they were nearly equal; but Rankin, by Wesley's favour, had the preeminence. Asbury winced, but was too good a man to raise rebellion. He writes: "1774, May 25—Our conference began at Philadelphia. The overbearing spirit of a certain person had excited my fears. My judgment was stubbornly opposed for a while, and, at last, submitted to. But it is my duty to bear all things with a meek and patient spirit. Our conference was attended with great power, and all acquiesced in the future stations of the preachers. If I were not deeply conscious of the truth and goodness of the cause in which I am engaged, I should, by no means, stay here. Lord, what a world is this! yea, what a religious world!"[2]

Within two years, the entire band were scattered by the colonial rebellion, and apostolic Asbury was the only one remaining. Meanwhile, Rankin sent to Wesley an account of the first Methodist conference in America, and Wesley replied to him as follows.

"EPWORTH, *July* 21, 1774.

"DEAR TOMMY,—In yours of May the 30th, you give me an agreeable account of your little conference in Philadelphia. I think G. Shadford and you desire no novelties, but love good old Methodist discipline and doctrine. I have been lately thinking a good deal on one point, wherein, perhaps, we have all been wanting. We have not made it a rule, as soon as ever persons were justified, to remind them of going on to perfection.

[1] *Christian Miscellany*, 1846, p. 93.
[2] Asbury's Journal, vol. i., p. 112.

1774 Age 71 Whereas, this is the very time preferable to all others. They have then the simplicity of little children; and they are fervent in spirit, ready to cut off the right hand, or to pluck out the right eye. But, if we once suffer this fervour to subside, we shall find it hard enough to bring them again to this point.

"I am, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Before passing from America, it is worth recording, that it was in the year 1774 that Methodism was introduced into another part of Newfoundland. In the month of March in that year, John Hoskins, a London Methodist, and his son, a lad of about sixteen years of age, embarked at Poole in Dorsetshire, and landed in Newfoundland five weeks afterwards. The intention of Hoskins was to work there till he had obtained money enough to take him to New England, where he wished to begin a school. He landed at Trinity penniless, and utterly unknown, and found himself in a "rocky, desolate country," and surrounded by a "few, low, mean huts, built of wood." He entered one to make inquiries as to how he might obtain subsistence; the good woman of the hut gave him some seal and bread to eat; and the minister of the place advised him to open a school at Old Perlican, where about fifty families resided. Away he went, a distance of one-and-twenty miles; the people received him gladly; and his school was opened. Here there was literally no religious worship whatever; but the schoolmaster began to read the Church prayers, and Wesley's sermons; the people standing at a distance and looking at him as if he had been a monster. He then proceeded to give extempore exhortations; a few began to be serious; some helped him to sing; sixteen became penitent, and were formed into a class; and two or three soon found peace with God. Just at this juncture, Mr. Arthur Thomy, an Irish merchant, visited the place on business, and preached twice or thrice, confirming what Hoskins had said, and the society increased to forty members, and the *believers* to eight.

Thus was Methodism begun at Old Perlican. It soon spread. Island Cove had a society of thirty, and was the first to build a chapel. At Harbourgrace and Carbonear,

[1] Palmer's "Four Years in the Old World," p. 260.

where Mr. Coughlan had laboured, Calvinism and antinomianism were rampant, and Methodism had dwindled to almost nothing. The movement at Old Perlican was a new beginning; and Hoskins, the schoolmaster, and Thomy, the Irish merchant, were the chief actors. Thomy often travelled as far as fifty miles to preach; and sometimes met with brutal treatment. The Irish were his bitterest enemies, and, on one occasion, came with their shillalahs to kill him. Hoskins, also, had his share of persecution. Once he was daubed all over with tar, and was further threatened to be stuck with feathers. The work, however, prospered; and, in 1785, *Newfoundland* became one of the *circuits* in Wesley's minutes. 1774 Age 71

The conference, at Bristol, was opened on August 9. Wesley writes: "The conference, which begun and ended in love, fully employed me on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday; and we observed Friday, 12th, as a day of fasting and prayer for the success of the gospel."

Thomas Taylor, who was present, says: "August 9—Most of the day was taken up in temporal matters, which is dry business. August 10—This morning our characters were examined, and that closely. The afternoon was chiefly spent in taking in new preachers. In the evening, Mr. Wesley gave us but an indifferent sermon. August 11—We spent this day pretty profitably in considering some things of importance; especially how to prevent levity, idleness, and evil speaking. At night, Mr. Wesley gave us a profitable discourse on brotherly love."[1]

Miss March, in an unpublished letter, dated August 23, 1774, observes:

"Our conference is now ended. I promised myself a jubilee, a time of holy rejoicing, but found it rather a season of hurry and dissipation. Mr. Wesley opened the conference with a plan of great and necessary business. His preaching was chiefly to the preachers,—of the searching, reproving kind. The preachers said there was much concord amongst them, and one observed, Mr. Wesley seemed to do all the business himself. Friday was the best time, and the evening sermon, from Matthew vii. 24, was the prettiest and most simple discourse I ever heard on that text. Mr. Wesley left us on Monday for Wales. When he first came he looked worn down with care and sorrow; but he left us well and lively."

It was at this conference that Samuel Bradburn and James

[1] Taylor's manuscript journal.

1774 Age 71 Rogers were admitted on trial; and that Joseph Pilmoor, for some reason, deserted Thomas Rankin in America, and desisted from travelling.

No sooner was the conference over, than Wesley again set out on his evangelistic travels. The next twelve days were spent in Wales. He returned to Bristol for the Sunday services on August 28; and, on the day following, started off to Cornwall. He came back to Bristol on September 9, and employed the next month in the city and its neighbourhood. Being the time of a parliamentary election, he met the Bristol society, and advised those of them who had votes:—"1. To vote, without fee or reward, for the person they judged most worthy. 2. To speak no evil of the person they voted against. 3. To take care their spirits were not sharpened against those that voted on the other side."

Wesley came to London on October 15, and spent the remainder of the year in his usual winter journeys.

Norwich was again a trouble. He writes: "Never was a poor society so neglected as this has been for the year past. The morning preaching was at an end; the bands suffered all to fall in pieces; and no care at all taken of the classes, so that, whether they met or not, it was all one; going to church and sacrament were forgotten; and the people rambled hither and thither as they listed. I met the society, and told them plain, I was resolved to have a regular society or none. I then read the rules, and desired every one to consider whether he was willing to walk by these rules or no. Those, in particular, of meeting their class every week, unless hindered by distance or sickness; and being constant at church and sacrament. I desired those who were so minded to meet me the next night, and the rest to stay away. The next night we had far the greater part. I spoke to every leader, concerning every one under his care, and put out every person whom they could not recommend to me. After this was done, out of 204 members, 174 remained. And these points shall be carried, if only fifty remain in society."

On his return to London, he visited Ely and St. Ives, and met with an adventure which was strange, even in his experience. Approaching Ely, Mr. Dancer met him with a chaise. For a mile and a half, the road was inundated.

"How must foot people come to Ely?" he asked. "Why," replied simple Mr. Dancer, "they must wade." The further he went, the more difficult and dangerous was the way. Between Ely and St. Ives, snow fell in great abundance, and, at considerable peril, Wesley's borrowed chaise was piloted by Mr. Tubbs, who trudged along, at the horse's head, and, up to his knees in mud and water, naively said, "We fen men don't mind a little dirt." For four miles, Wesley was dragged through this "slough of despond," when further progress, for the vehicle, became impossible. He tried to proceed on horseback; but this also was soon impracticable, the whole district being one wide waste of water. "Here, therefore," says he, "I procured a boat, full twice as large as a kneading trough. I was at one end, and a boy at the other, who paddled me safe to Erith; where Miss L—— waited for me with another chaise, which brought me safe to St. Ives." 1774 Age 71

Wesley concluded the year's itinerary thus: "December 25—During the twelve festival days, we had the Lord's supper daily; a little emblem of the primitive church."

Was this a lingering remnant of Wesley's high churchism? What would be said of the Methodists of the present day, were they to imitate the example of their founder?

The Calvinian controversy still proceeded. The *Gospel Magazine* told its readers, that Arminianism "is a system founded in ignorance, supported by pride, and will end in delusion." The Hon. and Rev. W. B. Cadogan, a young man of twenty-three, and, though not yet ordained, already presented to the living of St. Giles, Reading, burned Wesley's works in his kitchen, saying "he was determined to form his opinions from the Bible alone."[1] The two Hills were silent, with the exception of Mr. Richard's "Lash at Enthusiasm, in a Dialogue founded upon real Facts." The principal Calvinistic work, published at this period, was Toplady's "Historic Proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England," in two volumes 8vo, with an Introduction, most lamentably virulent. The subject is repulsive; but, rightly to understand Wesley's provocations and patience, it is necessary to give extracts from this scandalous production of a conceited but clever man, who

[1] Memoirs of Cadogan, p. 37.

1774 acted as though the Almighty had elected him to revile his
Age 71 neighbours, without either sense or reason.

"Mr. John Wesley and Mr. Walter Sellon are a pair of insignificant adversaries, who have arraigned, tried, and condemned the Church of England. In general, they are so excessively scurrilous and abusive, that contending with them resembles fighting with chimney sweepers, or bathing in a mud pool." "Mr. Walter Sellon is Mr. John Wesley's retainer general and whitewasher in ordinary. Arminianism is their mutual Dulcinea del Toboso. High mounted on Pine's Rosinante, forth sallies Mr. John from Wine Street, Bristol, brandishing his reed, and vowing vengeance against all, who will not fall down and worship the Dutch image which he has set up. With an almost equal plenitude of zeal and prowess, forth trots Mr. Walter from Ave Maria Lane, low mounted on Cabe's halting dapple. The knight and the squire having met at the rendezvous appointed, the former prances foremost, and, with as much haste as his limping steed will permit, doth trusty Walter amble after his master." Sellon is Wesley's "understrapper"; the "junto are Parthians aiming their arrows at the sun; and wolves exhausting their strength by howling at the moon." Sellon "dips his pen in the common sewer"; and Wesley "scatters firebrands." "The world has long seen, that unmixed politeness can no more soften Mr. Wesley's rugged rudeness, than the melody of David's harp could lay the north wind." Sellon was "a small body of Pelagian divinity, bound in calf, neither gilt nor lettered"; "the meanest, and most rancorous Arminian priest that ever disgraced a surplice." "We would advise his Arminian holiness of Rome to cashier the image of St. Austin from serving any longer as a support to his easy chair; and to procure an effigy of Mr. Walter Sellon, to serve—not, indeed, upon due recollection, as a stay to his holiness's throne—nor even as a prop to his footstool; but as a leg to a certain convenience (a *sella perforata*, though not the *sella porphyretica*), whereon, I presume, his holiness deigns, occasionally, to sit." Wesley's Notes on the New Testament are "a wretched bundle of plagiarisms"; and he himself "drives a larger traffic in blunders and blasphemies than any other blunder merchant this island has produced."

Such are a few of the mild and merciful oracular utterances of the elect Augustus Toplady; who says he blamed himself "for handling Wesley too gently, and for only giving him the whip when he deserved a scorpion." 1774 Age 71

Fletcher, during 1774, published:—(1) "The Fictitious and the Genuine Creed; being 'A Creed for Arminians,' composed by Richard Hill, Esq.; to which is opposed a Creed for those who believe that Christ tasted death for every man." 12mo, 52 pages. (2) "Logica Genevensis continued; or, the first part of the Fifth Check to Antinomianism, containing an Answer to 'The Finishing Stroke' of Richard Hill, Esq.; in which some remarks upon Mr. Fulsome's Antinomian Creed, published by the Rev. Mr. Berridge, are occasionally introduced." 12mo, 48 pages. (3) "Logica Genevensis continued; or, the second part of the Fifth Check to Antinomianism, containing a Defence of 'Jack o' Lanthorn,' and 'The Paper Kite,' *i. e.* sincere obedience; and of the 'Cobweb,' *i. e.* the evangelical law of liberty; and of the 'Valiant Sergeant, J. F.,' *i. e.* the conditionality of perseverance, attacked by the Rev. Mr. Berridge, in his book called 'The Christian World Unmasked.'" 12mo, 44 pages. (4) "The First Part of an Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism." 12mo, 264 pages. (5) "Zelotes and Honestus reconciled; or, an Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism continued: being the first part of the Scripture Scales to weigh the Gold of Gospel Truth. With a Preface containing some Strictures upon the Three Letters of Richard Hill, Esq., which have been lately published." 12mo, 175 pages.

The whole of these publications, extending to nearly 600 pages, are full of the greatest truths, and, like all Fletcher's writings, are entirely free from personal abuse, and are worthy of a gentleman, a scholar, and a Christian.

We can hardly say as much of another work, published in 1774: "A Scourge to Calumny, in two parts, inscribed to Richard Hill, Esq. Part the First, demonstrating the Absurdity of that Gentleman's Farrago. Part the Second, containing a full Answer to all that is material in his Farrago Double Distilled. By Thomas Olivers." 12mo, 168 pages. Richard Hill deserved all he got; but Fletcher would have hesitated before charging him, as is done by Olivers, "*with*

1774 Age 71 *wilful untruth.*" At the same time, it is impossible not to have a feeling of admiration for the sturdy Welshman, when he says to the wealthy squire, who had rudely called him *Tom the cobbler:* "Permit me to tell you, sir, that *my name* is as sacred to *me*, as *yours is to you.* If *you* were the greatest peer of the realm, and *I* the poorest peasant, the laws of God and of my country would authorise me to call you to an account, for every insult offered to my character, either as a fellow creature, or as an Englishman. You have no more authority, either from reason or religion, to call me *Tom*, than I have to call you *Dick.*"

Having hurled a lance in his own defence, he then proceeds to defend Wesley, telling Mr. Hill, that the man he had maligned was one who had published a hundred volumes, who travelled yearly about five thousand miles, preached yearly about a thousand sermons, visited as many sick beds as he preached sermons, and wrote twice as many letters; and who, though now between seventy and eighty years of age, "absolutely refused to abate, in the smallest degree, these mighty labours; but might be seen, at this very time, with his silver locks about his ears, and with a meagre, worn out, skeleton body, *smiling* at storms and tempests, at such labours and fatigues, at such difficulties and dangers, as, I believe," says Olivers, "would be absolutely intolerable to *you*, sir, in conjunction with any four of *your most flaming* ministers."

Wesley's own publications, in 1774, were not many.

First of all, there was the fifteenth number of his Journal, already mentioned: 12mo, 112 pages. Then there was "An Extract from Dr. Cadogan's Dissertations on the Gout, and all Chronic Diseases," already referred to on page 111. 12mo, 49 pages. This was a bold stroke. Dr. Cadogan's work had not been more than ten years published; it had been extremely popular, and had run through several editions; the doctor himself was now at the zenith of his fame, and did not die for three-and-twenty years afterwards; and, yet, Wesley takes upon himself, not to publish the work itself, but an extract from it, and to write a preface to it, in which he objects to the doctor's wholesale condemnation of "smoked and salted meats, of pickles, of wine, and of flesh, thoroughly roasted or boiled." Wesley says: "I recommend the book as the most masterly

piece upon the subject, which has yet appeared in the English language." 1774 Age 71

Another of Wesley's publications was "Thoughts upon Necessity," 12mo, 33 pages. This was one of his most thoughtful and able tracts. Its purport may be gathered from a sentence in his preface,—"I cannot believe the noblest creature in the visible world to be only a fine piece of clock-work."

To the above must be added his "Thoughts on Slavery," 8vo, 53 pages. It ought never to be forgotten, that John Wesley was one of the very first of England's philanthropists to denounce the infamous evil of slavery. Statues, and other honours, declarative of a nation's homage, have been justly awarded to Wilberforce; but Wesley's record is on high; and the day has yet to come when the influence of his advanced views will be duly and gratefully recognised. Even some of Wesley's friends were strangely blinded to a system that he boldly denounced as the "execrable sum of all villanies"; and Whitefield himself, only four years before, had died the possessor of a large number of human beings, who, in his will, were classed among his goods and chattels, and whom he unceremoniously bequeathed to "that elect lady, the Right Honourable Selina, Countess Dowager of Huntingdon." Wesley's pamphlet was no sooner issued than it brought upon him vindictive opposition, in a two shilling book, entitled "A Supplement to Mr. Wesley's 'Thoughts upon Slavery'"; in which the writer does his utmost to make the leader of the Methodists ridiculous. Wesley had counted the cost, and expected this. In America it was otherwise. There, at Philadelphia, Mr. Anthony Benezet republished Wesley's tract at his own expense, and sent to him a friendly salutation, by William Dillwyn, "my old pupil," says Benezet, "a valuable, religiously minded person, who is going a voyage to your country";[1] and who, thirteen years afterwards, in 1787, became one of the founders of the Society for the Suppression of Slavery.

Wesley still continued the publication of his collected works; and, in 1774, seven additional volumes were issued,

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1787, p. 44.

1774 making the entire number thirty-two. The last seven, with
Age 71 the exception of three small tracts, consisted exclusively of his journals, coming down to September 1, 1770.

Perhaps there ought to be added another publication, which, though not printed by Wesley, was his production: "A Sermon preached at the opening of the new Meeting-house at Wakefield, on the 28th of April, 1774, by the Rev. John Wesley: taken down in shorthand, at the time of delivery, by Mr. Williamson, a teacher of that art, and published at the request of many of the hearers. Leeds: 1774. Sold by all Booksellers, price threepence." 8vo, 12 pages. The text is 1 Corinthians i. 23, 24. The sermon, perhaps properly, has never been published in any edition of Wesley's works. Though it contains nothing remarkable, it would enrich the *Methodist Magazine*, and would be gratefully welcomed by thousands of readers, who, without a reissue, will never see it.

1775.

ACCORDING to his custom, Wesley spent the first two months of 1775 in London, and in short preaching excursions to Northamptonshire and other places. 1775 Age 72

The nation, at this period, was in a state of the highest excitement. On February 9, the two houses of parliament presented an address to King George III., stating that the British colonists in America had risen in rebellion, and begging his majesty to "take the most effectual measures to enforce obedience to the laws and authority of the supreme legislature." His majesty's reply was affirmative; and parliament was requested to increase both the naval and military forces.

Wesley was not the man to be silent in great emergencies. He writes: "Sunday, January 29—Finding many were dejected by the threatening posture of public affairs, I strongly enforced our Lord's words, 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?'" Three weeks later, he preached at the Foundery, what the *Westminster Journal* described as, "an awful sermon, on the horrid effects of a civil war"; observing "that, of all scourges from God, war was the most to be deprecated, because it often swept away all traces of religion, and even of humanity." The text was Daniel iv. 27: "Let my counsel be acceptable to thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity."

Both England and America were terribly excited; but space prevents our entering into details. Suffice it to say, that the alleged grievance of the American colonists was their being taxed, without their consent, by the English parliament. Dr. Johnson was known to be a great hater as well as a great genius. "Sir," said he, concerning the miscellaneous and mongrel colonists across the Atlantic, "Sir, they are a race of convicts, and ought to be thankful for anything we allow them short of hanging." No wonder that the English government, already at

1775 Age 72 their wits' end, applied to Johnson to assist them with his powerful pen. He did so, by the publication, in 1775, of his famous pamphlet, entitled, "Taxation no Tyranny; an Answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress."[1] No sooner was it issued, than, with or without leave, Wesley abridged it, and, without the least reference to its origin, published it as his own, in a quarto sheet of four pages, with the title, "A Calm Address to our American Colonies. By the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, M.A. Price one penny."

This was an injudicious and unwarrantable act, except on the supposition that there was some secret understanding between him and Johnson; and even then the thing had too much the aspect of plagiarism to be wise. Johnson greatly reverenced Patty Hall, Wesley's unfortunate sister, and always treated her as one of his confidential friends. For Wesley himself he also entertained great respect, and was only vexed that he was not able to secure more of his company. "John Wesley's conversation," said he, "is good, but he is never at leisure. He is always obliged to go at a certain hour. This is very disagreeable to a man who loves to fold his legs and have out his talk, as I do."[2] There was unquestionably a friendship between the two; and it is possible that Wesley had Johnson's consent to his publication of the abridgment of Johnson's pamphlet. In a letter to Wesley, dated February 6, 1776, Johnson wrote: "I have thanks to return for the addition of your important suffrage to my argument on the American question. To have gained such a mind as yours may justly confirm me in my own opinion. What effect my paper has had upon the public I know not; but I have no reason to be discouraged. The lecturer was surely in the right who, though he saw his audience slinking away, refused to quit the chair while Plato stayed."[3] This certainly gives some countenance to the supposition we have ventured to suggest. Still, there can be no doubt that Wesley fairly exposed himself to acrimonious attack by publishing the *brochure* as his own.

Wesley was now one of the most conspicuous men in

[1] Boswell's Life of Johnson. [2] Ibid.
[3] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1797, p. 455.

England; and, perhaps, no ecclesiastical personage of the realm swayed a wider influence over the masses, on questions involving religious interests. Hence, the publication of his "Calm Address" produced an unparalleled sensation; and this was the greater, because it was known that, up to this period, Wesley had sympathised with the colonists rather than otherwise. Indeed, he had declared five years before, in his "Free Thoughts on Public Affairs": "I do not defend the measures which have been taken with regard to America; I doubt whether any man can defend them, either on the foot of law, equity, or prudence." Of course, Wesley had a perfect right to change his opinions, which he says he did on reading Johnson's "Taxation no Tyranny"; but when a public man like Wesley does that, he can hardly escape criticism of an unfriendly nature. The world dislikes changelings, and hesitates to trust them. Wesley, in the teeth of former sentiments, now made Johnson's sentiments his own, contending not only that the English parliament had power to tax the American colonies, but also that it was a reasonable thing for the colonists to reimburse the mother country for some part of the large expense that had been incurred in defending the colonial rights, and that the whole of the present agitation was promoted by a few men in England, who were determined enemies to monarchy, and who wished to establish a republican form of government, which, of all others, was the most despotic. The result was, Wesley was at once pounced upon as a plagiarist and a renegade of the worst description. Countless pamphlets were published, only a few of which can be noticed here. 1771 Age 7

One of his principal antagonists was the Rev. Caleb Evans, then a baptist minister at Broadmead, Bristol, and in the thirty-seventh year of his age,—a man of good sense, a diligent student, a faithful pastor, and extensively useful; but a rampant advocate of what was called liberty, and, therefore, a well wisher to the republican rebellion across the Atlantic.

Evans's first publication was "A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, occasioned by his 'Calm Address'": 12mo, 24 pages. He taunts Wesley with having so suddenly changed his opinions; with having, at the late election, advised the

1775 Age 72 Bristol Methodists to vote for the "*American candidate*"; and with having, at no remote period, recommended a book entitled, "An Argument in Defence of the exclusive right claimed by the Colonies to tax themselves."

Wesley's reply to this was the republication of his "Calm Address," with a preface prefixed, in which he acknowledges that the "Address" was an extract "of the chief arguments from 'Taxation no Tyranny,'" with "an application" of his own "to those whom it most concerned." In a page and a half he answers Evans's objections, and says that all "the arguments in his tract may be contained in a nutshell."

Another attack on Wesley, which, before the year was out, reached a second edition, was "A Cool Reply to a Calm Address, lately published by Mr. John Wesley. By T. S." 12mo, 33 pages. What this production lacked in argument it made up in scurrilous inuendo. Wesley is told that his "religious principles are a species of popery," and that he is in quest of "a mitre"; though he "ought to sit in sackcloth and pour dust upon his head."

Evans also, before the expiration of 1775, issued a new edition of his letter, 12mo, 32 pages, in the preface to which he waxes angry, in exposing what he calls "the shameful versatility and disingenuity of this artful man;" and does his utmost to fasten upon Wesley a deliberate falsehood, because Wesley had denied that he had ever seen the book which Evans had accused him of recommending, though both William Pine, his own printer, and the Rev. James Roquet, his friend, were both prepared to attest on oath that he had recommended the book to them.

Here then was a direct personal issue between them. Thomas Olivers, in his "Full Defence of the Rev. John Wesley," 12mo, 24 pages, published in 1776, gives the explanation. Wesley's denial was not owing to untruthfulness, but forgetfulness. "Mr. Wesley," says Olivers, "is now an old man, and yet has such a variety and multiplicity of business as few men could manage, even in the prime of life. There are few weeks in which he does not travel two or three hundred miles; preach and exhort in public between twenty and thirty times, and often more; answer thirty or forty letters; speak with as many persons in private, concerning things of

deep importance; and prepare, either in whole or in part, something for the press. Add to all this, that often, in that short space of time, a variety of tracts on different subjects pass through his hands, particularly as he travels, and that if any tract does not immediately relate to his office as a divine, though he may give it a cursory reading, yet he does not think it necessary to charge his memory with its contents: I say, when all these things are considered, no one will think it strange that his memory should often fail." 1775 Age 72

This was a reasonable explanation of an awkward discrepancy; but Wesley, who was incapable of falsehood, hardly needed the defence of his ingenious friend Olivers. He had already written the following to Mr. Roquet himself.

"*November* 12, 1775.

"DEAR JAMES,—I will now simply tell you the thing as it is. As I was returning from the Leeds conference, one gave me the tract which you refer to, part of which I read on my journey. The spirit of it I observed to be admirably good; and I *then* thought the arguments conclusive. In consequence of which, I suppose, (though I do not remember it,) I recommended it both to you and others; but I had so entirely forgotten it, that even when it was brought to me the other day, I could not recollect that I had seen it.

"I am, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Besides the pamphlets already mentioned, there were published, in 1775: "A Second Answer to Mr. John Wesley. By W. D." 12mo, 22 pages. Also, "A Wolf in Sheep's Cloathing; or an Old Jesuit Unmasked. Containing an account of the wonderful apparition of Father Petre's Ghost, in the form of the Rev. John Wesley. By Patrick Bull, Esq." 12mo, 24 pages: a vile production in which Wesley is branded as "a chaplain in ordinary to the Furies, or minister extraordinary to Bellona, goddess of war;" and is said to have "solicited to be made bishop of Quebec;" but who, for "the jacobitical doctrines contained in his 'Calm Address,' deserves to be presented, not with *lawn sleeves*, but with a *hempen neckcloth;* and, instead of a mitre, ought to have his head adorned with a white nightcap drawn over his eyes."

[1] Olivers' "Defence," p. 19.

1775 Age 72 Toplady was not likely to allow such an opportunity to pass without embracing it to vent his venom. Hence the publication of his 12mo tract of 24 pages, entitled, "An Old Fox Tarr'd and Feather'd"; with a fox's head, in canonicals, for a frontispiece. The opening sentence is characteristic of the whole effusion. "Whereunto shall I liken Mr. John Wesley? and with what shall I compare him? I will liken him unto *a low and puny tadpole in divinity*, which proudly seeks to disembowel *a high and mighty whale in politics*." He then proceeds to say, that, "both as to matter and expression Wesley's 'Calm Address' is a bundle of Lilliputian shafts, picked and *stolen* out of Dr. Johnson's pincushion. If Mr. Wesley had the least spark of shame remaining, the simple detection of such enormous literary theft would be more terrible to his feelings than an English *pumping* or an American *tarring and feathering*."

Another pamphlet, issued in the same year, was "A Constitutional Answer to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's 'Calm Address to the American Colonies'": 12mo, 23 pages. The last sentence is as follows: "As I have formerly seen you, with pleasure, in the character of a *Christian minister*, doing some good in the moral world; so it is with regret I now see you in the character of a *court sycophant*, doing much more mischief in the political world; injuring, perhaps irreparably injuring, your *country*."

"Americus," also, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*,[1] had his fling against the poor Methodist. One sentence from his polished quiver must suffice, as a specimen of others: "And now, Mr. Wesley, I take my leave of you. You have forgot the precept of your Master, that God and mammon cannot be served together. You have one eye upon a pension, and the other upon heaven,—one hand stretched out to the king, and the other raised up to God. I pray that the first may reward you, and the last forgive you!"

These extracts might be multiplied almost *ad infinitum*. We only add, that Fletcher, as well as Olivers, came to the defence of Wesley. The former published his "Vindication of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's 'Calm Address': in some Letters to

[1] Vol. for 1775, p. 561.

Mr. Caleb Evans." 12mo, 70 pages. This evoked from Evans an unworthy acrimonious "Reply," 12mo, 103 pages, in which the angry baptist not only rakes up the whole story respecting Wesley, Roquet, and Pine, but finishes by telling the loving and accomplished Fletcher, that he is "the most verbose, and most unmeaning and unfair disputant, that ever took up the polemical gauntlet." 1775 Age 72

Hampson and Whitehead censure Wesley for turning a politician. This is a point upon which opinions will differ. Certain it is, however, that the political part which Wesley took made him as many enemies as his caveat against Calvinism had done. Within three weeks, forty thousand copies of his "Calm Address" were printed and put into circulation; and excited so much anger among the English friends of the revolted colonists, that they would willingly have burnt both him and his Address together. To accuse him of mercenary motives was an unfounded, base, malignant fabrication. It is true, that the government were so pleased with his little tract, that copies were ordered to be distributed at the doors of all the metropolitan churches; and it is said that one of the highest officers of state waited upon him, asking whether government could in any way be of service to either himself or his people. Wesley replied that he "looked for no favours, and only desired the continuance of civil and religious privileges." The nobleman pressed the question, but again received the same answer. In retiring, he observed: "In all probability, sir, you have some charities which are dear to you; by accepting £50 from the privy purse, to appropriate as you may deem proper, you will give great pleasure to those for whom I act." This was accepted; but "Mr. Wesley," says Dr. Clarke, who related the story, "expressed himself to me as sorry that he had not requested to be made a royal missionary, and to have the privilege of preaching in every church.[1]"

This might be true; but, in conclusion, we must add to it Wesley's own account, as published at the time, in *Lloyd's Evening Post.*

"SIR,—I have been seriously asked,—From what motive did you publish your 'Calm Address to the American Colonies'?

[1] Everett's Life of Dr. A. Clarke.

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"I seriously answer, Not to get money. Had that been my motive, I should have swelled it into a shilling pamphlet, and have entered it at Stationers' Hall.

"Not to get preferment for myself, or my brother's children. I am a little too old to gape after it myself; and if my brother or I sought it for them, we have only to show them to the world.

"Not to please any man living, high or low. I know mankind too well. I know they that love you for political service, love you less than their dinner; and they that hate you, hate you worse than the devil.

"Least of all, did I write with a view to inflame any; just the contrary. I contributed my mite toward putting out the flame which rages all over the land. This I have more opportunity of observing than any other man in England. I see with pain to what a height this already rises, in every part of the nation. And I see many pouring oil into the flame, by crying out, 'How unjustly, how cruelly, the king is using the poor Americans; who are only contending for their liberty, and for their legal privileges!'

"Now there is no possible way to put out this flame, or hinder its rising higher and higher, but to show that the Americans are not used either cruelly or unjustly; that they are not injured at all, seeing they are not contending for liberty,—this they had even in its full extent, both civil and religious; neither for any legal privileges, for they enjoy all that their charters grant. But what they contend for is the illegal privilege of being exempt from parliamentary taxation,—a privilege this which no charter ever gave to any American colony yet; which no charter can give, unless it be confirmed both by king, lords, and commons; which, in fact, our colonies never had; which they never claimed till the present reign; and probably they would not have claimed it now, had they not been incited thereto by letters from England.

"This being the real state of the question, without any colouring or aggravation, what impartial man can either blame the king, or commend the Americans?

"With this view, to quench the fire, by laying the blame where it was due, the 'Calm Address' was written.

"As to reviewers, newswriters, *London Magazines*, and all that kind of gentlemen, they behave just as I expected they would. And let them lick up Mr. Toplady's spittle still; a champion worthy of their cause.

"Sir, I am your humble servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Thus things proceeded. England was flooded with political pamphlets; the houses of parliament echoed with the sonorous periods of senatorial oratory; and the hill sides and river banks of America rang with sharp and dissonant peals of musketry. Blood had been shed at Lexington; and, at the bungling battle at Bunker Hill, the English had lost 1050 men, in killed and wounded. In the month of November,

Wesley says: "I was desired to preach, in Bethnal Green church, a charity sermon for the widows and orphans of the soldiers that were killed in America. Knowing how many would seek occasion of offence, I wrote down my sermon." The discourse was immediately published, with the title, "A Sermon preached at St. Matthew's, Bethnal Green, on Sunday, November 12, 1775. By John Wesley, M.A. For the benefit of the widows and orphans of the soldiers who lately fell near Boston, in New England." 8vo, 33 pages. Wesley speaks of the terrible distress from which the nation was suffering. Thousands were totally unemployed. He had seen not a few of them "standing in the streets, with pale looks, hollow eyes, and meagre limbs." He says, he had "known families, who, a few years ago, lived in an easy, genteel manner," driven to the necessity of repairing to the fields "to pick up the turnips which the cattle had left: and which they boiled, if they could get a few sticks for that purpose, or otherwise ate them raw." Thousands had "screamed for liberty till they were utterly distracted, and their intellects quite confounded." "In every town, men, who were once of a calm, mild, friendly temper, were now mad with party zeal, foaming with rage against their quiet neighbours, ready to tear out one another's throats, and to plunge their swords into each other's bowels." He then proceeds to descant, in withering terms, on the sins of the nation,—money getting, lying, gluttony, idleness, and profanity. The sermon altogether, considering the time and circumstances of its delivery, was one of the boldest he ever preached; and, of course, added to the rage that his "Calm Address" had kindled. The *Gospel Magazine*, in reviewing it, remarks: "So many barrels of *tar* have of late been lavished on Mr. Wesley, and so many bags of *feathers* have been shaken over him, on account of his new political apostasy, that it might seem unmerciful in us, should we add to the *anointings* and to the *powderings*, which he has already so plentifully, though not undeservedly, received. We shall therefore, from a principle of compassion, touch his sermon with the tenderer hand, and let the sermoniser himself very lightly off, the enormity of his demerits considered." And then the tender reviewer, in his unmerited compassion, proceeds to describe "the sermon as being as dry as an old piece

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1775 Age 72 of leather that has been tanned five thousand times over"; and the preacher as "a tip-top *perfectionist* in the art of lying." All this revives a recollection of "The Old Fox tarred and feathered,"—and of its polite author, the Rev. Augustus Toplady, who had just now become the courteous editor of the misnamed *Gospel Magazine.*

At the conference of 1774, Wesley had 2204 members of society in America, and seven itinerant preachers, Messrs. Rankin, Asbury, Shadford, Williams, King, Dempster, and Rodda; and to direct these, in the midst of a great rebellion, required more than ordinary wisdom. A few extracts from his letters to Thomas Rankin will not be without interest.

"LONDON, *March* 1, 1775.

"DEAR TOMMY,—As soon as possible, you must come to a full and clear explanation, both with brother Asbury, and with Jemmy Dempster. But I advise brother Asbury to return to England the first opportunity.

"There is now a probability that God will hear prayer, and turn the counsels of Ahithophel into foolishness. It is not unlikely that peace will be reestablished between England and the colonies. But, certainly, the present doubtful situation of affairs may be improved to the benefit of many. They may be strongly incited now 'to break off their sins by repentance, if it may be a lengthening of their tranquillity.'

"I add a line to all the preachers:—

"*My Dear Brethren,*—You were never in your lives in so critical a situation as you are at this time. It is your part to be peacemakers; to be loving and tender to all; but to addict yourselves to no party. In spite of all solicitations, of rough or smooth words, say not one word against one or the other side. Keep yourselves pure: do all you can to help and soften all; but beware how you adopt another's jar. See that you act in full union with each other; this is of the utmost consequence. Not only let there be no bitterness or anger, but no shyness or coldness, between you. Mark all those who would set one of you against the other. Some such will never be wanting. But give them no countenance; rather ferret them out, and drag them into open day. The conduct of T. Rankin has been suitable to the Methodist plan. I hope all of you tread in his steps. Let your eye be single. Be in peace with each other, and the God of peace will be with you."

Under the same date, Charles Wesley wrote to Rankin as follows.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—As to public affairs, I wish you to be like-minded with me. I am of neither side, and yet of both; on the side of New England, and of Old. Private Christians are excused, exempted, privileged, to take no part in civil troubles. We love all, and pray for all,

with a sincere and impartial love. Faults there may be on both sides; but such as neither you nor I can remedy: therefore, let us, and all our children, give ourselves unto prayer, and so stand still and see the salvation of God." 1775 Age 72

The war was not the only thing that gave Wesley trouble. Thomas Rankin and Francis Asbury were not able to agree; and Miss Gilbert had actually written to Asbury, stating that Mr. Gilbert was about to leave Antigua; and wishing him to come, and to take charge of the three hundred Methodists in that island. Asbury was inclined to accept of this invitation; but was deterred by his want of ordination, and therefore, as he thought, want of authority to administer the sacraments of the Christian church. Wesley wished him to return to England. What a disaster, if he had![1] These facts will cast light on the following letters.

"PORTARLINGTON, *April* 21, 1775.

"DEAR TOMMY,—Brother Asbury has sent me a few lines, and I thank him for them. But I do not advise him to go to Antigua. Let him come home without delay. If one or two stout, healthy young men would willingly offer themselves to that service, I should have no objection; but none should go, unless he was fully persuaded in his own mind. I am afraid, you will soon find a day of trial: the clouds are black both over England and America. It is well if this summer passes over without some showers of blood. And if the storm once begins in America, it will soon spread to Great Britain.

"I am, dear Tommy, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."

"BALLINROBE, *May* 19, 1775.

"DEAR TOMMY,—I doubt not but brother Asbury and you will part friends; I hope I shall see him at the conference. He is quite an upright man. I apprehend he will go through his work more cheerfully when he is a little distance from me.

"We must speak the plain truth, wherever we are, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. And among our societies we must enforce our rules, with all mildness and steadiness.

"Never was there a time, when it was more necessary for all that fear God, both in England and in America, to wrestle with God in mighty prayer. In all the other judgments of God, the inhabitants of the earth learn righteousness; but wherever war breaks out, God is forgotten, if He be not set at open defiance. What a glorious work of God was at Cambuslang and Kilsyth, from 1740 to 1744! But the war that followed

[1] Asbury's Journal.

1775 tore it all up by the roots, and left scarce any trace of it behind; insomuch that, when I diligently inquired a few years after, I could not find one that retained the life of God!"
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"CLARMAIN, *June* 13, 1775.

"DEAR TOMMY,—I am afraid our correspondence, for the time to come, will be more uncertain than ever, since the sword is drawn; and it is well if they have not, on both sides, thrown away the scabbard. What will the end of these things be, either in Europe or America? It seems, huge confusion and distress, such as neither we nor our fathers had known![1] But it is enough, if all issues in glory to God, and peace and goodwill among men. Never had America such a call to repentance; for, unless general reformation prevent general destruction, what a scene will soon be opened! Ruin and desolation must soon overspread the land; and fair houses be turned into ruinous heaps. But what are those strange phenomena which you speak of? Send me an account of just so much as you can depend on. Should you not appoint in America, as we do in England and Ireland, one or more general days of fasting and prayer?"

"NEAR LEEDS, *July* 28, 1775.

"DEAR TOMMY,—I rejoice to hear that the work of our Lord still prospers in your hands. If the temple is built even in troublous times, it is not by the power of man. I rejoice too over honest Francis Asbury, and hope he will no more enter into temptation. I know no reason why you should not print the names of the American preachers. You may print an edition of the 'Christian Pattern,' and apply the profits of it to the payment of the debt. The societies should pay the passage of the preachers. But you must not imagine, that any more of them will come to America till these troubles are at an end.

"Certainly, this is the point which we should insist upon, in season and out of season. The universal corruption of all orders and degrees of men loudly calls for the vengeance of God; and, inasmuch as all other nations are equally corrupt, it seems God will punish us by one another. What can prevent this, but a universal, or, at least, a general repentance?"

"LONDON, *August* 13, 1775.

"DEAR TOMMY,—I am not sorry that brother Asbury stays with you another year. In that time, it will be seen what God will do with North America; and you will easily judge whether our preachers are called to remain any longer therein. If they are, God will make their way plain, and give them favour even with the men that delight in war. The clouds do indeed gather more and more; and it seems a heavy storm will follow; certainly it will, unless the prayers of the faithful obtain a longer reprieve."

[1] Words fearfully realised, first in America, next in France, and then throughout all Europe.

"LONDON, *October* 20, 1775. 1775
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"DEAR TOMMY,—I am glad you are going into North Carolina; and why not into South Carolina too? I apprehend, those provinces would bear much fruit, as most parts of them are fresh, unbroken ground. And as the people are further removed from the din of war, they may be more susceptible of the gospel of peace.

"A paper was sent to me lately, occasioned by the troubles in America; but it would not do good. It is abundantly too tart; and nothing of that kind will be of service now. All parties are already too much sharpened against each other; we must pour water, not oil, into the flame. I had written a little tract[1] upon the subject before I knew the American ports were shut up. I think there is not one sharp word therein; I did not design there should. However, many are excessively angry; and would willingly burn me and it together. Indeed it is provoking; I suppose above forty thousand of them have been printed in three weeks, and still the demand for them is as great as ever.

"I am entirely of your mind. I am persuaded, love and tender measures will do far more than violence. And if I should have an interview with a great man, which seems to be not unlikely, I will tell him so, without any circumlocution.

"I am, dear Tommy, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

The "great man" referred to was probably Lord North, the prime minister of the English cabinet, to whom, and to the Earl of Dartmouth, Wesley had, four months before, addressed most important letters, in which he strongly endeavoured to convince the government of the exceedingly critical condition of public matters. No man in the kingdom had suffered more from the violation of English law than Wesley had; and yet now, in England's extremity, no man evinced a more loyal spirit than was evinced by him. Indeed, his loyalty became, in the eyes of his enemies, a crime, and brought him, not reward, but ruffianly reproach. An extract from the letters to the two ministers of state may fitly, for the present, close these American reminiscences.

"ARMAGH, *June* 15, 1775.

"MY LORD,—Whether my writing do any good or no, it need do no harm; for it rests with your lordship whether any eye but your own shall see it.

"I do not enter upon the question, whether the Americans are in the

[1] His "Calm Address."
[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., pp. 302–308.

1775 Age 72 right or in the wrong. Here all my prejudices are against the Americans; for I am a high churchman,[1] the son of a high churchman, bred up, from my childhood, in the highest notions of passive obedience and non-resistance; and yet, in spite of all my long rooted prejudices, I cannot avoid thinking, if I think at all, that an oppressed people asked for nothing more than their legal rights, and that in the most modest and inoffensive manner that the nature of the thing would allow.[2] But waiving all considerations of right and wrong, I ask, is it common sense to use force towards the Americans? These men will not be frightened; and it seems, they will not be conquered so easily as was at first imagined. They will probably dispute every inch of ground; and, if they die, die sword in hand. Indeed, some of our valiant officers say, 'Two thousand men will clear America of these rebels.' No, nor twenty thousand, be they rebels or not, nor perhaps treble that number. They are as strong men as you; they are as valiant as you, if not abundantly more valiant, for they are one and all enthusiasts,—enthusiasts for liberty. They are calm, deliberate enthusiasts; and we know how this principle 'breathes into softer souls stern love of war, and thirst of vengeance, and contempt of death.' We know men, animated with this spirit, will leap into a fire, or rush into a cannon's mouth.

"'But they have no experience in war.' And how much more have our troops? Very few of them ever saw a battle. 'But they have no discipline.' That is an entire mistake. Already they have near as much as our army, and they will learn more of it every day; so that, in a short time, if the fatal occasion continue, they will understand it as well as their assailants.[3] 'But they are divided amongst themselves.' No, my lord, they are terribly united; not in the province of New England only, but down as low as the Jerseys and Pennsylvania. The bulk of the people are so united, that to speak a word in favour of the present English measures would almost endanger a man's life. Those who informed me of this are no sycophants; they say nothing to curry favour; they have nothing to gain or lose by me. But they speak with sorrow of heart what they have seen with their own eyes, and heard with their own ears.

"These men think, one and all, be it right or wrong, that they are contending *pro aris et focis;* for their wives, children, and liberty. What an

[1] Did Wesley mean this? That is, did he use it in any sense except that which immediately follows?

[2] This may seem to clash with the tenor of Wesley's "Calm Address"; but the reader must recollect, that it was not until after the date of this letter that the "Calm Address" was written; and that Wesley's change of opinions did not occur until after the Leeds conference of 1775. Wesley's foresight, throughout the whole of this fearful war, was most remarkable.

[3] It is a remarkable fact, that this letter was written within forty-eight hours before the disgraceful and disastrous battle at Bunker Hill, where Wesley's warnings to the premier and colonial secretary of England were too amply verified. With his itinerants in America, Wesley knew quite as much of American affairs as Lord North, and perhaps a little more.

advantage have they herein over many that fight only for pay! none of whom care a straw for the cause wherein they are engaged; most of whom strongly disapprove of it. Have they not another considerable advantage? Is there occasion to recruit troops? Their supplies are at hand, and all round about them. Ours are three thousand miles off. Are we then able to conquer the Americans, suppose they are left to themselves, suppose all our neighbours should stand stock still, and leave us and them to fight it out? But we are not sure of this. Nor are we sure that all our neighbours will stand stock still. I doubt they have not promised it; and, if they had, could we rely upon those promises? 'Yet, it is not probable they will send ships or men to America.' Is there not a shorter way? Do they not know where England and Ireland lie? And have they not troops, as well as ships, in readiness? All Europe is well apprised of this; only the English know nothing of the matter! What if they find means to land but two thousand men? Where are the troops in England or Ireland to oppose them? Why, cutting the throats of their brethren in America! Poor England, in the meantime!

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"'But we have our militia—our valiant, disciplined militia. These will effectually oppose them.' Give me leave, my lord, to relate a little circumstance, of which I was informed by a clergyman who knew the fact. In 1716, a large body of militia were marching towards Preston against the rebels. In a wood, which they were passing by, a boy happened to discharge his fowling piece. The soldiers gave up all for lost, and, by common consent, threw down their arms, and ran for life. So much dependence is to be placed on our valorous militia.

"But, my lord, this is not all. We have thousands of enemies, perhaps more dangerous than French or Spaniards. As I travel four or five thousand miles every year, I have an opportunity of conversing freely with more persons of every denomination than any one else in the three kingdoms. I cannot but know the general disposition of the people,—English, Scots, and Irish; and I know a large majority of them are exasperated almost to madness. Exactly so they were throughout England and Scotland about the year 1640, and, in a great measure, by the same means; by inflammatory papers, which were spread, as they are now, with the utmost diligence, in every corner of the land. Hereby the bulk of the population were effectually cured of all love and reverence for the king. So that, first despising, then hating him, they were just ripe for open rebellion. And, I assure your lordship, so they are now. They want nothing but a leader.

"Two circumstances more are deserving to be considered: the one that there was, at that time, a decay of general trade almost throughout the kingdom; the other, there was a common dearness of provisions. The case is the same, in both respects, at this day. So that, even now, there are multitudes of people that, having nothing to do, and nothing to eat, are ready for the first bidder; and that, without inquiring into the merits of the case, would flock to any that would give them bread.

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"Upon the whole, I am really sometimes afraid that this evil is from the Lord. When I consider the astonishing luxury of the rich, and the shocking impiety of rich and poor, I doubt whether general dissoluteness of manners does not demand a general visitation. Perhaps the decree is already gone forth from the Governor of the world. Perhaps even now:

'As he that buys, surveys a ground,
So the destroying angel measures it around.
Calm he surveys the perishing nation;
Ruin behind him stalks, and empty desolation.'

"But we Englishmen are too wise to acknowledge that God has anything to do in the world! Otherwise should we not seek Him by fasting and prayer, before He lets the lifted thunder drop? O my lord, if your lordship can do anything, let it not be wanting! For God's sake, for the sake of the king, of the nation, of your lovely family, remember Rehoboam! Remember Philip the Second! Remember King Charles the First!

"I am, with true regard, my lord, your lordship's obedient servant,
"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Whatever may be thought of the principle advocated in Wesley's "Calm Address to the American Colonies," namely, that taxation without representation is no tyranny, there can be no doubt that his letters to the premier and to the colonial secretary are full of warnings and foresight which were terribly fulfilled; and, for fidelity, fulness, terseness, in short, for *multum in parvo,* were perhaps without a parallel in the correspondence of these ministers of state.

Much space has been occupied with these American affairs. If an apology were needed, the reader might be courteously reminded (1) that John Wesley's "Calm Address" threw, not Methodism only, but the nation, into a fever of excitement, and, directly and indirectly, gave birth to scores of pamphlets on the same subject; (2) that the American rebellion is one of the greatest events in English history; and (3) that, in consequence of the great majority of the clergy of the English Church fleeing from the colonies, when the colonies most needed them, Methodism, under the sagacious management of the apostolic Asbury, took the place which had hitherto been occupied by Anglican episcopacy; and, henceforth, literally

[1] Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i., p. 726; and *Macmillan's Magazine* for December, 1870.

became the predominant religion of what is likely to be the greatest and most prosperous country in the world. 1775 Age 72

We must now return to Wesley in a more private capacity.

The reader has long lost sight of Peter Bohler. In 1739, after the conversion of the two Wesleys, Bohler went to Georgia, and his life, since then, had been spent in unwearied Christian work, partly in America and partly in Europe. His labours now were nearly ended; and, on April 27, 1775, he peacefully expired, in London, at the age of sixty-three. For years past, correspondence seems to have ceased between Wesley and his early Moravian friend. Within three months of Bohler's death, it was renewed. Wesley wrote to him on the 5th of February, and Bohler, in a beautifully Christian letter, responded. A few days later, Wesley wrote again, as follows.

"*February* 18, 1775.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—When I say, 'I hope I shall never be constrained to speak otherwise of them' (the Moravians), I do not mean, that I have any expectation this will ever happen. Probably it never will. I never did speak but when I believed it was my duty so to do. And, if they would calmly consider what I have spoken from March 10, 1736, and were open to conviction, they might be such Christians as are hardly in the world besides. I have not lost sight of you yet. Indeed, I cannot, if you are 'a city set upon a hill.'

"Perhaps no one living is a greater lover of peace, or has laboured more for it, than I; particularly, among the children of God.[1] I set out, near fifty years ago, with this principle, 'Whosoever doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.' But there is no one living that has been more abused for his pains, even to this day. But it is all well. By the grace of God, I shall go on, following peace with all men, and loving your Brethren beyond any body of men upon earth, except the Methodists.

"Wishing you every gospel blessing, I remain your very affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Thus ended Wesley's intercourse with Bohler, till it was renewed in heaven.

Eleven days after the above was written, Wesley left

[1] These were not empty words, though Wesley was almost perpetually in war. In an unpublished letter, to Matthew Lowes, dated March 6, 1759, he writes: "What would one not do, except sin, that brotherly love may continue!"

[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1854, p. 691.

1775 Age 72 London for Ireland, proceeding, as usual, by way of Bristol and the midland counties. Nothing remarkable occurred in his journey to Liverpool. Of course, he was preaching continually, and, winter though it was, sometimes out of doors. While doing so, at Newcastle under Lyne, "a buffoon," he says, "laboured to interrupt him; but, as he was bawling, with his mouth wide open, some arch boys gave him such a mouthful of dirt as quite satisfied him."

At Dublin, at the request of "the good old dean," he assisted in administering the Lord's supper in St. Patrick's. At Maryborough, he complied with the wish of the clergyman, and preached in the parish church. The Methodist chapel at Waterford he describes as "a foul, horrid, miserable hole." For the first time, he preached at Clones, using, as his church, an old Danish fort. Here Methodism had been introduced about the year 1768. The papists were furious, and magistrates refused to interfere; but, just when the place was about to be given up, a military pensioner, an old presbyterian, took his stand in the centre of the market, and, shouldering his musket, declared that he would shoot the first man that attempted to disturb the preacher. The rioters were frightened; and the rough old soldier mounted guard every sabbath afternoon, until opposition ceased.[1]

At Londonderry, Wesley accepted the bishop's invitation to dinner; the prelate remarking, "I know you do not love our hours, and will therefore order dinner to be on the table between two and three o'clock." "We had," says Wesley, "a piece of boiled beef, and an English pudding. This is true good breeding."

At Castle Caulfield, writes Wesley, with the utmost *sang froid*, "the rain came plentifully, through the thatch, into my lodging room; but I found no present inconvenience, and was not careful for the morrow."

Six days afterwards, Wesley was seized with illness, which nearly proved fatal; but for three days more, though in a burning fever, he continued travelling and preaching almost as usual. He had now reached the town of Lurgan, where, four years previously, a society had been formed, one of the

[1] Life of Henry Moore.

first members being Isaac Bullock, an old soldier, who had been at the capture of several islands in the West Indies, and was one of sixty, called "the forlorn hope," who, in 1762, first entered the breach at the storming of Havannah, only six of the sixty escaping with their lives. The house of this sturdy veteran was the preaching place of the Lurgan Methodists.[1] Here Wesley was obliged to succumb to fever. He sent for a physician, who told him he must rest. Wesley replied, he could not, as he "had appointed to preach at several places, and must preach as long as he could speak." The doctor gave him medicine, and off he went to Tanderagee, and then to a gentleman's seat, three miles beyond Lisburn, where nature sank, and the conquered evangelist was compelled to take his bed. Strength, memory, and mind entirely failed. For three days, he lay more dead than alive. His tongue was black and swollen. He was violently convulsed. For some time his pulse was not discernible. Hope was almost gone; when Joseph Bradford, his travelling companion, came with a cup, and said, "Sir, you must take this." Wesley writes: "I thought, 'I will, if I can swallow, to please him; for it will do me neither harm nor good.' Immediately it set me a vomiting; my heart began to beat, and my pulse to play again; and, from that hour, the extremity of the symptoms abated." Six days afterwards, to the astonishment of his friends, and, as he says, "trusting in God," he set out for Dublin, where, within a week, he was preaching as usual. 1775 Age 72

This was a memorable epoch, even in Wesley's eventful life. The house in which he lay so dangerously ill was the hospitable dwelling of Mr. Gayer, of Derryaghey,[2] a devoted Methodist of great respectability, who had built a chapel in the village, and, for the accommodation of the preachers, a room, which went by the name of "the prophet's chamber." His daughter, afterwards Mrs. Wolfenden, was now a converted girl, sixteen years of age, and, with her mother, was Wesley's nurse. Great anxiety was felt for Wesley's life, and, while a few select friends were praying that, as in the

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1827, p. 800. [2] Ibid. 1834, p. 413.

1775 Age 72 case of Hezekiah, God would add to his days fifteen years, Mrs. Gayer suddenly rose from her knees, and cried, "The prayer is granted!" Marvellously enough, Wesley's recovery immediately commenced, and he survived, from June 1775 to March 1791, a period of just fifteen years, and a few months over.

But even this was not all the wonder. Alexander Mather, at the time, was at Sheerness, in Kent, where he read, in the newspapers, that Wesley was actually dead. Mather says, he was not able to give credence to this; and, before he went to preach, he opened his Bible on the words, "Behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years" (Isa. xxxviii. 5); and away he went to the chapel, and began to pray that the promise, made to Hezekiah, might be fulfilled in the case of Wesley.[1] These are striking facts. We give them as we find them. The sceptic will sneer; but the Christian will exercise an unfaltering faith in the glorious text, which, in the history of the church, has been confirmed in instances without number: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

The news of Wesley's dangerous illness created the utmost consternation among his friends. The following is a letter, hitherto unpublished, addressed by Charles Wesley to Joseph Bradford, Wesley's faithful companion.

"BRISTOL, *June* 29, 1775.

"DEAR JOSEPH,—Be of good cheer. The Lord liveth, and all live to Him. Your last is just arrived, and has cut off all hope of my brother's recovery. If he could hold out till now, that is, ten days longer, he might recover; but I dare not allow myself to hope it, till I hear from you again. The people here, and in London, and every place, are swallowed up in sorrow. But sorrow and death will soon be swallowed up in life everlasting. You will be careful of my brother's papers, etc., till you see his executors. God shall reward your fidelity and love. I seem scarce separated from him whom I shall so very soon overtake. We were united in our lives, and in our death not divided. Brethren, pray a very little longer for your loving servant—CHARLES WESLEY.

"*Thursday Evening.*

"Yours of the 20th, I have this moment received. It only confirms my fears. My brother, soon after you wrote, in all probability, entered

[1] York society book.

into the joy of his Lord. Yet write again, and send me the particulars. I have not, and never more shall have, strength for such a journey. The Lord prepare us for a speedy removal to our heavenly country! 1775 Age 72

"CHARLES WESLEY."

The tidings of Wesley's recovery produced corresponding joy. His old friend and former itinerant, now the Rev. Dr. John Jones, of Harwich, wrote to him as follows.

"HARWICH, *July* 29, 1775.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I cannot express what I felt when I was informed that you were both senseless and speechless. It was like life from the dead when I heard you were out of danger and able to sit up. It gave me some hope, that God has not yet given up these sinful nations, and that He will strive with us a little longer. Time was when you would have taken my advice, at least, in some things. Let me entreat, let me beseech you, to preach less frequently, and that only at the principal places. You must be satisfied with directing others, and doing less yourself. You yourself do not know of how great importance your life is. Far be it from me to desire you not to travel; I only beg you not to go beyond your strength.

"JOHN JONES." [1]

Another friend, in London, wrote the following.

"LONDON, *July* 8, 1775.

"REVEREND SIR,—God, who comforteth those who are cast down, hath comforted us by graciously restoring you to us again. The prayer of faith has saved the sick. The voice of joy and gladness is now found in the dwellings of the righteous; where eight days past there were mourning, lamentation, and woe. Every social repast was embittered, and we literally mingled our drink with our tears. Could you, from the bed of sickness, have cast your eyes on the congregation, the first sabbath in the month, and beheld distress in every face, keen anguish in every heart, your generous soul would have been willing to have tarried awhile, absent from your Lord, to return to comfort those mourners in Sion. The tidings of your recovery was received with melting gratitude and joyous tears. O sir, what a week of suspense and anguish! You will not surely blame us, that our prayers helped to detain you in the vale below. Forgive your weeping friends if they have brought you back from the skies: surely, in the end, you will be amply recompensed! O yes! being longer employed in the work of faith, and labour of love, your crown will be the brighter." [2]

These are specimens of the loving congratulations of

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1787, p. 444. [2] Ibid. 1787, p. 552.

1775 Age 72 Wesley's friends.[1] His illness was sharp, though short. The only lasting effect was, it stripped him, at all events for months afterwards, of his beautiful head of hair.[2]

Having spent three weeks in Dublin, and regained his strength, he, on July 23, embarked for England, having in the morning of that day again assisted in administering the Lord's supper in St. Patrick's cathedral. Landing at Parkgate, he proceeded to Leeds to meet his conference, preaching, as he travelled, with as much zest as ever; except that he spent a day or two at Miss Bosanquet's, making conference preparations. Notwithstanding the warnings and entreaties of his friends, his labours were unabated. Referring to his illness and recovery, he wrote, in 1781: "From this time" (1775) "I have, by the grace of God, gone on in the same track, travelling between four and five thousand miles a year, and, once in two years, going through Great Britain and Ireland; which, by the blessing of God, I am as well able to do now as I was twenty or thirty years ago. About a hundred and thirty of my fellow labourers are continually employed in the same thing. We all aim at one point, not at profit, any more than at ease, or pleasure, or the praise of men; but to spread true religion through London, Dublin, Edinburgh, and, as we are able, through the three kingdoms. This is our point. We leave every man to enjoy his own opinion, and to use his own mode of worship, desiring only, that the love of God and his neighbour be the ruling principle in his heart, and show itself in his life by a uniform practice of justice, mercy, and truth. And, accordingly, we give the right hand of fellowship to every lover of God and man, whatever his opinion or mode of worship be, of which he is to give an account to God only."[3]

Dr. Jones's advice to Wesley was lost labour. Wesley's life was a perpetual motion. Work seemed to be essential to its

[1] A curious 12mo tract, of four pages, was published, with the following title: "Some Verses, occasioned by the severe Illness, much feared Dissolution, and almost miraculous Restoration, of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, at Lisburne, in Ireland, July 2, 1775. London: printed 1or W. Kent, No. 116, High Holborn: 1775." These verses were directed to be *sung* "to the tune of 'Oliver's.'"

[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 469.

[3] Ibid. vol. xiii., p. 359.

continuance. There are but few who can sincerely sing the lines, which he, from his inmost heart, sang so often: 1775 Age 72

"Oh that, without a lingering groan,
I may the welcome word receive,
My body with my charge lay down,
And cease *at once to work and live!*"

Wesley, however, could give advice, though it was not always that he took it. The following extract from a letter to his brother, written at this period, contains an example of this, besides referring to his publishing affairs and the movements of his miserable wife.

"LONDONDERRY, *June* 2, 1775.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I thought it strange, that poor Samuel Franks should leave me £900 in debt. But it is stranger still, that John Atlay should have paid £1600 out of nine; and that I am £160 in debt notwithstanding!

"Mr. Walthen's method of radical cure I shall hardly try.[1] I am very easy, and that is enough.

"Has my friend taken a house at Bristol? Is Noah with her? What are they doing?

"Preach as much as you can, and no more than you can. You never will be much stronger till you add change of air to exercise; riding two or three hundred miles point blank forward. Now you have an opportunity. Meet me at Leeds with honest John Murlin. When you are tired you may change places with him. You would return a stout, healthy man.

"Peace be with you and yours! Adieu!

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Another instance of advice giving is too racy to be omitted. The letter was addressed to John King, one of his preachers in America.

"NEAR LEEDS, *July* 28, 1775.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Always take advice or reproof as a favour: it is the surest mark of love.

"I advised you once, and you took it as an affront; nevertheless I will do it once more.

"Scream no more, at the peril of your soul. God now warns you by me, whom He has set over you. Speak as earnestly as you can; but do not scream. Speak with all your heart; but with a moderate voice. It was said of our Lord, 'He shall not *cry*': the word properly means, He shall not *scream*. Herein, be a follower of me, as I am of Christ. I

[1] The cure of his hydrocele. [2] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 132.

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often speak loud, often vehemently; but I never scream; I never strain myself. I dare not: I know it would be a sin against God and my own soul. Perhaps one reason why that good man, Thomas Walsh, yea, and John Manners too, were in such grievous darkness before they died, was, because they shortened their own lives.

"O John, pray for an advisable and teachable temper! By nature you are very far from it: you are stubborn and headstrong. Your last letter was written in a very wrong spirit. If you cannot take advice from others, surely you might take it from your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

The above characteristic letter was written at Miss Bosanquet's, Cross Hall, Morley, where Wesley had arranged to have if possible, a few days' retirement, before he met his conference, at Leeds. In a letter to that lady, dated May 29, 1775, and therefore previous to his illness, he writes: "The last day of June, I hope to be in Dublin, and the end of July in England. If I have a ready passage, probably I may have an opportunity of hiding myself a day or two with you; but I do not desire any of the preachers to come to me till I send for them. If they do, I shall run away; I will not be in a crowd."[2]

One or two days' retirement was not much for an old man to wish; but it was more than he could get. The preachers would not be prevented seeing him; and who can blame them? If the magnet attracts the needle, the magnet has no right to censure the needle for yielding to its own attractive influence. An extract from an unpublished letter, written, at this period, by simple hearted, loving Samuel Bardsley, will illustrate what we mean. "I never was at a better conference. The Lord was with us of a truth. Had you seen us, and our dear, aged father and friend in the midst of us, and beheld the freedom and harmony there were among us, you would have blessed God on our behalf. ..We seemed to be determined to live and preach the gospel more than ever. On the Thursday before the conference began, Mr. Oliver and I had the pleasure of drinking tea and supping with dear Mr. Wesley, at Miss Bosanquet's, where we stopped all night. We were there when he arrived from Ireland, and I need not tell you with what joy and thankfulness we received the man

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 309.

[2] Ibid. p. 378.

of God, and especially as he appeared with his usual cheerfulness, and as well as we had seen him for some years. I had the pleasure of being with him alone, and desired him not to send me far from home. If he had proposed Worcester to me, I would have gone; but, as he did not, I thought it best to leave it to him where to send me; so he fixed me in this circuit (Haworth), which I shall love, if I have health, and live near to God." 1775 Age 72

The conference at Leeds opened on August 1, and concluded its sittings two days afterwards. It was the largest that had assembled for many years, and was unexampled for its free discussion.[1] Wesley writes: "Having received several letters, intimating that many of the preachers were utterly unqualified for the work, having neither grace nor gifts sufficient for it, I determined to examine the weighty charge with all possible exactness. In order to this, I read those letters to all the conference; and begged, that every one would freely propose and enforce whatever objection he had to any one. The objections proposed were considered at large; in two or three difficult cases, committees were appointed for that purpose. In consequence of this, we were all fully convinced, that the charge advanced was without foundation; that God has really sent those labourers into His vineyard, and has qualified them for the work; and we were all more closely united together than we had been for many years."

The very day after the conference concluded, Wesley again set out on his blessed wanderings, and preached at Bradford and Great Horton. He then took coach to London; spent five days there; and then went off to Wales, Bristol, and Cornwall; and got back to London on October 6. The remainder of the year was spent, partly in the metropolis, and partly in his usual tours through Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Norfolk, Kent, and Surrey.

The nation was too much excited, in 1775, to take much interest in the Calvinian controversy; which, however, still proceeded. Fletcher published "The Second Part of the Scripture Scales": 12mo, 237 pages. Also, "The Last Check

[1] Manuscript letter by Thomas Hanby.

1775 Age 72 to Antinomianism. A Polemical Essay on the Twin Doctrines of Christian Imperfection and a Death Purgatory." 12mo, 327 pages. Toplady, likewise, issued "The Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity Asserted; in opposition to Mr. John Wesley's Tract on that Subject."

As usual, Toplady excelled in abusiveness. He tells his readers, that the chief ingredients in Wesley's tract are "an equal portion of gross heathenism, Pelagianism, Mahometism, popery, Manicheanism, ranterism, and antinomianism, culled, dried, and pulverized, *secundum artem;* and, above all, mingled with as much palpable atheism as could be possibly scraped together." Wesley is taunted as a "poor gentleman, who is necessarily an universal meddler; and, as necessarily, an universal miscarrier." "He paddles in metaphysics, knows a little, presumes a great deal, and so jumps to conclusions." His "Thoughts on Necessity" are "as crude and dark as chaos."

This scurrility was a thing to which Wesley had been long accustomed. It was cast upon him by writers of all descriptions. In this same year, 1775, an octavo pamphlet of 35 pages was published, with the title, "A Letter to a Friend on the Subject of Methodism;" in which the anonymous writer, among a multitude of other calumnies, declares that the tendency of Wesley's system is "to fill parishes with whores, rogues, and bastards"; and defines Methodist preaching as "a ridiculous effusion, delivered with an enthusiastic air, a distorted countenance, a whining, snivelling accent, and a soporific, nasal twang." Wesley had too much of a gentleman's self respect to even notice vulgarities like these; and yet they were far from being pleasant, and tend to show that Methodism struggled into its mighty manhood amid the incessant peltings of every kind of pitiless persecution. The storm, during Wesley's lifetime, from one quarter or another, was perpetual; but, powerless to destroy, it simply made the roots of the tree strike deeper.

Two of Wesley's publications, in 1775, have been already noticed: The others were:

1. "A Sermon on 1 John v. 7." Dublin: 12mo, 31 pages.
2. "The Important Question. A Sermon, preached in Taunton, on September 12, 1775. Published at the Request

of many of the Hearers, for the Benefit of a Public Charity," 12mo, 33 pages. This sermon was delivered in the presbyterian chapel, and was made the means of converting Mrs. Stone, in whose house Dr. Coke, shortly after, met Wesley's preachers, to confer with them about his religious scruples; and where he preached his first sermon outside the precincts of a parish church.[1] 1775 Age 72

3. "A Concise History of England, from the earliest times to the death of George II." 12mo, 4 vols. Price, to subscribers, half a guinea. Wesley says, his "volumes contain the substance of the English history, extracted chiefly from Dr. Goldsmith, Rapin, and Smollett; only with various corrections and additions." Wesley made a profit of £200 by this publication; but gave it all away the week he got it.[2]

For many years, William Pine of Bristol had been Wesley's chief printer and publisher, and had recently brought out a revised edition of Wesley's collected works, in thirty-two 12mo volumes. Henceforth, the connection ceased. Pine became a red hot partisan of the rebellious colonists. Wesley disliked this, and wrote as follows to his brother Charles.

"LEEDS, *July* 31, 1775.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I must not delay answering your important question, 'What can be done with William Pine?' If he still, after my earnest warning, 'every week publishes barefaced treason,' I beg you would once more warn him in my name and in your own; and if he slights or forgets this warning, then give him his choice, either to leave us quietly, or to be publicly disowned. At such a time as this, when our foreign enemies are hovering over us, and our own nation is all in a ferment, it is particularly improper to say one word which tends to inflame the minds of the people."[3]

Thus Wesley's loyalty to King George severed his connection with William Pine, the weekly publisher of the once popular *Felix Farley's Journal.* Mr. Pine died in 1803.[4]

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1824, p. 568.
[2] Ibid. 1845, p. 1168.
[3] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 133.
[4] J. Pawson's manuscript letter.

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WESLEY'S first act, in 1776, was to join with eighteen hundred London Methodists in renewing his covenant with God. His next was to go to Bristol, partly to bury his brother-in-law, poor Westley Hall; and partly to restrain some of the Bristol Methodists, who were in danger of turning republicans.

The health of Fletcher of Madeley being seriously affected by a violent cough, accompanied by spitting of blood, Wesley believed nothing was so likely to restore his health as a long journey. "I therefore," says he, "proposed his taking a journey of some months with me, through various parts of England and Scotland; telling him, 'when you are tired, or like it best, you may come into my carriage; but remember that riding on horseback is the best of all exercises for you, so far as your strength will permit.'"[1]

Wesley proposed not only this, but more than this, as is evident from Fletcher's answer, hitherto unpublished.

"MADELEY, *January* 9, 1776.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I received last night the favour of yours from Bristol. My grand desire is to be just what the Lord would have me be. I could, if you wanted a travelling assistant, accompany you, as my little strength would admit, in some of your excursions; but your recommending me to the societies, as one who might succeed you, (should the Lord call you hence before me,) is a step to which I could by no means consent. It would make me take my horse and gallop away. Besides, such a step would, at this juncture, be, I think, peculiarly improper, and would cast upon my vindication of your minutes such an odium as the Calvinists have endeavoured to cast upon your 'Address.' It would make people suspect, that what I have done for truth and conscience sake, I have done with a view of being, what Mr. Toplady calls, 'the bishop of Moorfields.' We ought to give as little hold to the evil surmising and rash judgments of our opponents as may be. If, nevertheless, Providence throws in your way a clergyman willing to assist us, it would be well to fall in with that circumstance.

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xi., p. 290.

"I sent to you in London, by the last post, a manuscript entitled 'A Second Check to Civil Antinomianism,' being an extract from the 'Homily against Rebellion,' which I think might be spread at this time to shame Mr. Roquet and to calm the people's mind. Whether it is worth publishing you will see. I suppose it will make a threepenny tract. 1776 Age 7

"What has made me glut our friends with my books, is not my love to such publications; but a desire to make an end of the controversy. It is possible, however, that my design has miscarried, and that I have disgusted, rather than convinced, the people. I agree with you, sir, that now is the time to pray,—both for ourselves and our king,—for the Church of England and that part of it which is called the Methodists. I cast my mite of supplication into the general treasure. The Lord guide, support, and strengthen you more and more unto the end!

"I am, reverend and dear sir, your affectionate son and servant in the gospel,

"JOHN FLETCHER."[1]

Fletcher had overtaxed nature. His day of activity was comparatively over. True, he lived nine years longer; but, for two years, he lived in retirement with his friends, Mr. Greenwood at Newington, and Mr. Ireland of Bristol, with the exception of the time he spent in travelling with Wesley in quest of health; and upwards of three years more were spent in Switzerland; when, returning to England, he was married, on November 12, 1781, to Miss Bosanquet, and died on August 14, 1785.

Wesley writes: "He looked upon my proposal as a call from Providence, and willingly accepted it. He set out, (as I am accustomed to do,) early in the spring of 1776, and travelled, by moderate journeys, suited to his strength, which gradually increased, eleven or twelve hundred miles. When we returned to London, in the latter end of the year, he was considerably better. And, I verily believe, if he had travelled with me, partly in the chaise and partly on horseback, only a few months longer, he would quite have recovered his health. But this those about him would not permit; so, being detained in London by his kind, but injudicious, friends, while I pursued my journeys, his spitting of blood, with all the other symptoms, returned, and rapidly increased, till the physician pronounced him to be far advanced in pulmonary consumption."[2]

[1] Manuscript letter.
[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xi., p. 290.

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No doubt, Wesley wished to have Fletcher as his coadjutor and successor; but Providence determined otherwise. Fletcher had a great work to do, and did it; but it was not ordained that Fletcher should take Wesley's place.

It is a remarkable coincidence, that, in the very year when the health of Fletcher failed, Wesley formed an acquaintance with Thomas Coke. Born and educated at Brecon, Coke was now twenty-nine years of age. He had taken his degrees at Oxford, had received episcopal ordination, and, at present, was curate at South Petherton. Mr. Brown, a clergyman near Taunton, lent him the sermons and journals of Wesley, and the "Checks" of Fletcher. In the month of August, 1776, Wesley was Mr. Brown's guest at Kingston, and Coke went to see him. Wesley writes: "1776, August 13—I preached at Taunton, and afterwards went with Mr. Brown to Kingston. Here I found a clergyman, Dr. Coke, late a gentleman commoner of Jesus college, Oxford, who came twenty miles on purpose to meet me. I had much conversation with him; and a union then began, which, I trust, shall never end." The doctor expressed his doubts respecting the propriety of confining himself to one congregration. Wesley clasped his hands, and, in a manner peculiarly his own, said: "Brother, go out, go out, and preach the gospel to all the world!"[1] Coke rode back to Petherton pensive, and yet consoled. The tone of his ministry was now more decided than ever. The parish was remodelled, so to speak, into a circuit. On Sundays, after the second lesson, he would read a paper of his appointments for the ensuing week, with the place and time of service. His innovations, in preaching in cottages and barns, took a sort of Methodistic form, by being systematically arranged. The disgust of his opponents in the parish became intense; and, to prevent his having the opportunity of preaching a farewell sermon, his rector, without any previous notice, at the close of a public service, and in the presence of a listening congregation, abruptly announced that Coke was now dismissed. The die was cast. Coke attended Wesley's conference in Bristol, and, on August 19, 1777, Wesley writes: "I went to Taunton with Dr. Coke, who, being dismissed from

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1824, p. 568.

his curacy, has bid adieu to his honourable name, and determined to cast in his lot with us." Henceforth, Thomas Coke was a Methodist itinerant preacher, and became the great organiser of Methodist missions in other lands. 1776 Age 73

When Wesley enacted rules, he meant them to be observed. Laxity in the enforcement of discipline was to him a thing intolerable. He was a thorough disciplinarian himself, and insisted that his preachers should copy his example. Good as were the first Methodists, they were not perfect. Then, as now, some were defective in their attendance at the weekly class. In certain instances, as we have already seen, some were guilty of the crime of smuggling. Others, in moderation, were addicted to taking drams, and others opium; and it often happened that the oldest societies were the worst offenders. In 1776, both London and Newcastle were thus tainted; and Wesley was determined, with a strong hand, to purge them. Hence the following extracts from letters, addressed, at this period, to Joseph Benson, stationed at Newcastle.

"We must threaten no longer, but perform. In November last, I told the London society, 'Our rule is, to meet a class once a week; not once in two or three. I now give you warning: I will give tickets to none in February, but those that have done this.' I have stood to my word. Go you and do likewise, wherever you visit the classes. Begin, if need be, at Newcastle, and go on at Sunderland. Promises to meet are now out of date. Those, that have not met seven times in the quarter, exclude. Read their names in the society; and inform them all, you will the next quarter exclude all that have not met twelve times; that is, unless they were hindered by distance, sickness, or by some unavoidable business. And I pray, without fear or favour, remove the leaders, whether of classes or bands, who do not watch over the souls committed to their care 'as those that must give account.'"

What would become of Methodist societies if these imperative directions of Methodism's founder were enforced now?

Benson had expelled a smuggler, and Wesley wrote:

"You did right in excluding from our society so notorious an offender. You have now a providential call to stand in the gap between the living and the dead. Fear nothing. Begin in the name of God, and go through with it. If only six will promise you to sin no more, leave only six in society. But my belief is, a hundred and fifty are now clear of blame; and, if you are steady, a hundred more will amend. You must, at all

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events, tear up this evil by the roots. The 'Word to a Smuggler' should be read and dispersed. And secure your fellow labourers, that you may all speak one thing. Go on, for God is with you! Not only the assistant, but every preacher, is concerned to see all our rules observed. I desire brother Rhodes will give no tickets, either to those who have not constantly met their classes, or to any that do not solemnly promise to deal in stolen goods no more. He and you together may put a stop to this crying sin. If any leader oppose, you see your remedy; put another in his place. Nay, if he does not join heart and hand; for 'he that gathereth not with you scattereth.' The 'Word to a Smuggler' is plain and home, and has done much good in Kent. Taking opium is full as bad as taking drams. It equally hurts the understanding, and is, if possible, more pernicious to the health, than even rum or brandy. None should touch it, if they have the least regard either for their souls or bodies."[1]

The year 1776 was a period of great national distress; and, yet, it was now that Wesley started his scheme for the erection of Methodism's cathedral, the chapel in City Road. Who will write a history of London Methodism? or, which would be more popular, who will give the Methodists a monograph of the memories of Wesley's "new chapel" in City Road? Much might be said of the episcopal chapel in West Street, Seven Dials, of which Wesley obtained a lease, and which he opened on the 29th of May, 1743, as a Methodist meeting-house, and which was so occupied until 1798, when it was superseded by the purchase of another episcopal chapel, which then stood on part of the site of the present Methodist chapel in Great Queen Street.[2] Then there was the sacred old chapel in Spitalfields, built by the French protestants,—a chapel, which has seen many changes, but which is rich in sacred memories, and is the oldest Methodist place of worship in London, but which, *horresco referens!* is now the site of the brewery of Truman, Hanbury & Co.; and there is likewise its venerable successor, also originally a French protestant church, and still used for Methodist services, and occupied by Wesley before the one in City Road was built. There is Chelsea, whose first Methodist meeting place was an upper room in the house of an elderly woman, Mrs. Day, who resided in Royal Hospital

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., pp. 395–397.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 522.

Row.; and its next, one of the dancing rooms in the celebrated Ranelagh Gardens, for which a rent was paid of ten guineas per annum; and in which Wesley preached only about two months previous to his death, taking as his text words which his long life had illustrated: "The king's business requires haste."[1] There is Lambeth, where, in 1772, good old John Edwards opened his house for preaching; and then converted an adjoining building into a decent chapel; a man of vigorous mind, retentive memory, and fluent speech; for almost forty years an effective local preacher, and who, while on a preaching expedition, died at Irchester, in the county of Northampton, in 1803.[2] In London East, there was the old chapel in Gravel Lane, which, in 1811, was required for the London Docks; and its successor in Back Road, required by the Blackwall railway company.[3] There was the schoolroom near Mill Pond Bridge, Rotherhithe, succeeded by the purchased chapel in Albion Street.[4] There was Hoxton chapel, which originally belonged to the Dissenters; and there were the venerable meeting-houses at Wapping, Snowsfields, Peckham, and other places. All these have a history well worth writing, to say nothing of the parent of them all, the old pantile Foundery, Methodism's honoured cradle; and of which the Methodists retained possession, at least as late as the year 1785, when they received for it, in the shape of rent, £14 per year.[5]

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Then how rich the mine of London Methodist biography! Confining ourselves to Wesley's days, there is—Mary Cheesebrook, originally a kept mistress, converted in West Street chapel, never absent from the Foundery preaching, though, to be in time, she often had to run the distance, and who, every Saturday, after paying her little debts, gave away all the money she had left, leaving the morrow to take thought for the things of itself:—Mrs. Witham, a mother in Israel, an eminent pattern of calm boldness for the truth, of simplicity and godly sincerity, of unwearied constancy in attending all the ordinances of God, of zeal for God and

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1830, p. 310. [2] Ibid. 1803, p. 289.
[3] Ibid. 1847, p. 102. [4] Ibid. 1816, p. 446.
[5] City Road society book.

1776 Age 73 for all good works, and of self denial in every kind:—Elizabeth Langdon, whose trials were severe, and her death tranquil:—Hannah Lee, a model of industry, meekness, and patience:—Mary Naylor, distinguished for her Christian courage, and plainness of speech and of apparel:—Thomas Salmon, a good and useful man:—Joseph Norbury, a faithful witness of Jesus Christ:—William Hurd, a son of affliction, whose end was peace:—John Matthews, who, for some months before his death, was wont to say, "I have no more doubt of being in heaven, than if I was there already"; and of whom Wesley writes: "A man of so faultless a behaviour I have hardly ever been acquainted with. During twenty years, I do not remember his doing or saying anything which I would wish to have been unsaid or undone":—Ann Wheeler, who, twenty-five years before her death, while attending preaching in Moorfields, was struck in the forehead with a stone, the mark of which her unborn daughter bore to her dying day:—Rebecca Mills, always firm and unmoved, resting on the Rock of Ages, and in life and death uniformly praising the God of her salvation:—Elizabeth Duchesne, for near forty years zealous of good works, and who shortened her days by labouring for the poor beyond her strength:—William Osgood, a good man, who began life in poverty, but increased more and more till he was worth several thousand pounds:—Michael Hayes, who lived above a hundred and four years, mostly in vigorous health, and as he lived, so died, praising God:—Mrs. Kiteley, a perfect pattern of true womanhood, a good wife, a good parent, a good mistress, who, after many years of active benevolence, redeemed a poor friendless youth from prison, took the jail distemper, and died:—Heller Tanner, diligent, patient, loving to every man, and zealous of good works:—Bilhah Aspernell, who, for six-and-thirty years, without intermission, walked in the light of God's countenance, was always in pain, yet always rejoicing, and going about doing good; who on Sunday evening met her class as usual, and the next day sent for her old fellow traveller, Sarah Clay, and said to her, 'Sally, I am going." "Where are you going?" She cheerfully answered, "To my Jesus, to be sure!" and spoke no more:—Thomas Vokins, a man of a sorrowful spirit, who

always hung down his head like a bulrush, but who died triumphing over pain and death, and rejoicing with joy full of glory:—Mr. Bespham, many years master of a man of war, whose faith was full of mercy and good fruits:—George Parsons, a flame of fire wherever he went, losing no occasion of speaking or working for God; so zealously, so humbly, so unreservedly devoted to God, that few like him were left behind him:—Eleanor Lee, who lived in the enjoyment of perfect love for sixteen years, and of whom Wesley testified, "I never saw her do any action, little or great, nor heard her speak any word, which I could reprove":—Ann Thwayte, a woman of faith and prayer, for whom Wesley preached a funeral sermon:—Merchant West, a pattern of diligence in all things, spiritual and temporal:—Charles Greenwood, a melancholy man, full of doubts and fears, but who, two days before he died, was made so unspeakably happy that he exclaimed, "God has revealed to me things which it is impossible for man to utter":—George Hufflet, for many years a burning and shining light:—Ann Sharland, whose cancer in her breast caused her continual pain, but who triumphed gloriously through Christ;—and Robert Windsor, prudent, serious, diligent, full of mercy and good fruits. 1776 Age 73

All these died during Wesley's lifetime. The temptation to add to them is great. We should like to tell of William Palmer, Wesley's first classleader in London; and of his son, who was blind from infancy, was one of the first to form the Community, or body of workhouse visitors, often made preaching excursions into different parts of the country, with Wesley's sanction, and died in 1822, after being sixty-two years a Methodist.[1] Old Thomas Gibbs of Lambeth, also, deserves a place in Methodism's gallery,—a patriarch, who lived to the age of one hundred and four years, eighty-three of which he had been a member of Wesley's society; and who, at his death, in 1827, was probably the oldest Methodist in the world.[2] There is Isaac Andrews, one of the original subscribers to City Road chapel, a man of unimpeachable Christian character, a Methodist of sixty years' standing, who

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1823, p. 202. [2] Ibid. 1827, p. 430.

1776 Age 73 died at the age of eighty-two, in 1832.[1] There is Mrs. Maddan, whose mother, Mrs. Varin, was the eighth person whom Wesley received into church fellowship, when forming his infant society in Fetter Lane. There are Mrs. Mortimer and Mrs. Bruce, of whom the Rev. Richard Watson used to say, "they were the two finest specimens of primitive Methodism that he knew;" the latter being the daughter of parents who were among the eighteen persons who first joined Wesley in Christian fellowship, in 1739.[2] We cannot find room for more.

For five-and-thirty years, Wesley and his friends had worshipped in "the old Foundery." Here hundreds, perhaps thousands, had been converted; but, as the building was only held on lease, they were now in danger of losing it. On October 19, 1775, Wesley, writing to his brother, says: "on Friday I hope to be in London, and to talk with the committee about building a new Foundery."[3] A few months later, he wrote again: "1776, March 1—As we cannot depend on having the Foundery long, we met to consult about building a new chapel. Our petition to the city for a piece of ground lies before their committee; but when we shall get any further, I know not: so I determined to begin my circuit as usual; but promised to return whenever I should receive notice that our petition was granted." Exactly five months after this, Wesley started the first subscription, and, at three meetings, raised upwards of £1000. In November following, building plans were agreed upon; in April 1777, Wesley laid the foundation stone; and on Sunday, November 1, 1778, he opened his new sanctuary, by preaching, in the morning, on part of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple; and in the afternoon, on the hundred, forty and four thousand standing with the Lamb on mount Zion. He writes: "It is perfectly neat, but not fine; and contains far more people than the Foundery: I believe, together with the morning chapel, as many as the Tabernacle."

The chapel in City Road will always stand as a thanksgiving monument, raised, not by the London Methodists

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1832, p. 466. [2] Ibid. 1837, p. 399.
[3] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 134.

merely, but by Methodists throughout the three kingdoms. 1776
No sooner was it resolved to build, than Wesley issued the fol- Age 73
lowing circular, an original copy of which now lies before us.

"*October* 18, 1776.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—The society at *London* have given assistance to their brethren in various parts of England. They have done this for upwards of thirty years: they have done it cheerfully and liberally. The first year of the subscription for the *general debt*, they subscribed above *nine hundred pounds;* the next, above *three hundred;* and not much less every one of the ensuing years.

"They now stand in need of assistance themselves. They are under a necessity of building; as the *Foundery*, with all the adjoining houses, is shortly to be pulled down. And the city of London has granted ground to build on; but on condition of covering it, and with large houses in front, which, together with the new chapel, will, at a very moderate computation, cost upwards of *six thousand pounds.* I must, therefore, beg the assistance of all our brethren. *Now* help the *parent* society, which has helped others, for so many years, so willingly and so largely. *Now* help *me*, who account this as a kindness done to myself; perhaps, the last of this sort which I shall ask of you. Subscribe what you conveniently can, to be paid either now, or at Christmas, or at Ladyday next.

"I am, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY.

"The Trustees are { JOHN DUPLEX, CHARLES GREENWOOD, RICHARD KEMP, SAMUEL CHANCELLOR, CHARLES WHEELER, WILLIAM COWLAND, JOHN FOLGHAM."

We are afraid to enter into details, respecting the New Chapel, in City Road. John Pawson, who was appointed to the office of assistant in the London circuit, within two years after the chapel was opened, tells us, in an unpublished manuscript, that the plan proposed was to build an elegant chapel, such as even the lord mayor might attend, without any diminishing of his official dignity; and that it should be *wholly* supplied by ordained clergymen of the Established Church on Sundays, when the liturgy should be constantly read at both morning and evening service; and this, for a considerable time after the chapel was opened, was regularly done. No layman, so called,—that is, no itinerant preacher not episcopally ordained, was allowed to officiate within its walls, except on

1776 Age 73 week days. Charles Wesley, Thomas Coke, and John Richardson were City Road's only sabbatic priests: Pawson, Jaco, Rankin, Tennent, Olivers, and others, though better preachers than any of the trio, were not admitted; because their heads had not been touched by a bishop's fingers. Pawson says, that Richardson and Coke disapproved of this arrangement; but Charles Wesley persisted, until the congregations so fell off, and the society was thrown into such confusion, that the trustees of the chapel met, and waited on Charles Wesley with a request, that he would not preach so often at City Road, but would go sometimes to West Street on Sundays, and allow the itinerants to take his place on the hitherto forbidden ground. Charles reluctantly submitted; but wrote to his brother, casting all the blame upon the poor, tabooed itinerants, and stating that it was wholly owing to their deep rooted prejudices against the clergy of the Established Church, that these events had happened.

For many years, the men sat on one side the chapel, and the women on the other; and, besides this, there was another usage, which would not be popular at the present day: all the pews and seats were open. Large numbers paid for seats; but no one was allowed to call a seat, or a pew, his own. In 1788, the trustees endeavoured to make an alteration in both the respects just mentioned; "thus overthrowing," says Wesley, "at one blow, the discipline which I have been establishing for fifty years!" He continues, however: "we had another meeting of the committee; who, after a calm and loving consultation, judged it best—(1) that the men and women should sit separate still; and (2) that none should claim any pew as his own, either in the new chapel, or in West Street."

The days of the old Foundery have long been ended; the "New Chapel" in City Road still stands, and we trust will ever stand, by far the most sacred and attractive edifice in the Methodistic world. Not for a hundred pretentious gothic structures would Methodists of the olden type give up this Though its ceiling may be somewhat low, yet, taken as a whole, its architecture, for neatness, and commodiousness, and solidity, has been but rarely equalled, by the more pretentious Methodist buildings of the present day. We

are weary of gothic gaudiness, sacrificing the interests of the church of God to the pride of showy architects, and the mediæval whims of Methodists in danger of relapsing into mediæval darkness. Let the present race of Methodists have wisdom and modesty enough to build their chapels according to the plan adopted by a man, in all respects, their superior—Methodism's founder. Hail to old City Road! When we think of the ministers who have occupied its pulpit, of the families who have filled its pews, of the dead resting in graves round about its walls, and of the interesting events which make up its story,—we feel that of all the Methodist meeting-houses in existence, gothic or otherwise, marble or mudden, there is not one to equal this. 1776 Age 73

For many a long year, the chapel in City Road was the head of London Methodism; and, though there are now more than twenty heads, all owe a respectful obeisance to this. Its circuit plan, from June 17 to September 23, 1792, eighteen inches broad and fifteen deep, is simply headed, "A Plan for the Preachers in London;" the word Methodist, or Methodism, not being printed in any part of it. The preaching places, and hours of preaching, are as follows:—New Chapel, 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.; West Street, 9, 3 and 7; Spitalfields, 10 and 3; Wapping, 10 and 5; Snowsfields, 10 and 5; Lambeth, 6; Westminster, 5; Peckham, 3; Rotherhithe, 10 and 5; Deptford, 7, 10, and 5; Chelsea, 6; Brentford, 10, 2, and 6; Dorking, 11, 2, and 5; Raynham, 10 and 5; Purfleet, 9 and 5; Woolwich, 2 and 6; Wandsworth, 6; Mitcham, 2 and 6; Croydon, 2 and 6; Bromley, 3; Barnet, 2 and 5; Poplar, 11 and 5; Bow, 5; Stratford, 11 and 5; Barking, 5; Leyton, 5; Grosvenor Market, 6; Ratcliff Cross, 2; Christ Church, 5; Clerkenwell, 6; Kentish Town, 6; and Seven Dials without an hour. Such was London circuit at the time when Wesley died.

Interesting citations might be made from the old City Road society book, extending from August 23, 1784, to July 9, 1800. We learn, that sacramental collections were, upon an average, a little more than £3 each; and monthly collections, for "the furtherance of the gospel," about £6 10*s*. The sacrament was administered once a week; and what is now known among

1776 Age 73 the Methodists as a *quarterly* collection was then made once a month as just referred to. The entire circuit income, for 1786, was £862 16*s.* 5*d.*, which included sacramental collections and payments for graves, all of which were then appropriated to circuit purposes. Strangely enough, there is no entry of class moneys till 1788, from which time such entries were regularly made. Had the practice of collecting pence weekly in the classes been superseded by collections made at the weekly sacraments? This is not improbable; for, from the time when class moneys are entered as a part of the circuit income, the entries of sacramental collections, and collections for the furtherance of the gospel, cease. For the year 1787, including all sources of income, the average contribution per member per year was in this great London circuit 3*s.* 10½*d.*, or less than a shilling per member per quarter. How far was this from the requirement of Wesley's rules? Who will say that the former days were better than these? Besides, all that was contributed was not current coin; for in the same year there is a charge deducted of not less than £10 14*s.* 9½*d.* for bad money given at collections.

Many are the curious items in the list of circuit payments and allowances. The yearly salary paid to Wesley was £30; to his brother £60; to Creighton, £63; to Dickenson, £50; to Coke, £30; while the quarterage to the itinerants, and to their wives respectively, was £3 each. With a few more extracts we conclude this lengthened notice of London Methodism, during the last seven years of Wesley's life. "1784: November 7, a new pail, half a crown; December 6, chain for dog, two shillings. 1785: January 4, shaving the preachers, £2 10*s.* 6*d.*; February 18, "news pappers," 13*s.*; May 18, lamplighter, four weeks, 6*s.*; August 8, Mr. Tennant, to pay his debts, and to send him to Leeds, £9 9*s.*; August 13, letters, four weeks, £2 15*s.* 8½*d.* August 19, for shaving the preachers at conference, £7 5*s.* 3*d.* 1787: February 2, two trees for front of dwelling house, 3*s.* 6*d.*; December 17, for curtain over the altar, £5 1*s.* 9*d.* 1789: March 28, paid expenses of a hogshead of cider, from Guernsey, a present to Mr. Wesley, £1 9*s.*; July 7, paid the man servant a quarter's wages, £1 1*s.*; December 29, paid Mr. Moore for cold bath, £1 1*s.* 1790: July 1, the hairdresser's bill, £1 1*s.*, for one

quarter. 1791: February 22, paid the Rev. Mr. Wesley's salary (the last he received) £15; April 20, paid for Rev. Mr. Wesley's horses standing at livery, after his decease, £1 11*s.* 9*d.*; December 3, paid Mr. Judd's bill for hanging the New Chapel with black superfine cloth, £41 16*s.*"[1] 1776 Age 73

These may seem little things to introduce into a work like this; but little things often indicate greater, and, sometimes, it is only by knowing minute matters that men can form a correct opinion of a great general system.

After this long, but we hope not uninteresting digression, we must return to Wesley in 1776.

On Sunday evening, March 3, he set out from London to Bristol, and thence to his societies in the north. The tour was not completed until the 19th of July following, when he got back to London. Its incidents were much the same as previous ones, except that he was permitted to preach in a larger number of churches than usual,—namely, at Pebworth, Chowbent, Heptonstall, Bingley, Haworth, Colne, and at Banff in Scotland,[2] a proof that clerical prejudice was subsiding, and that the poor branded outcast was beginning to be regarded with a more favourable eye. The churches that he occupied in Yorkshire were crowded. Thomas Taylor, at that time in the Haworth circuit, writes, in his unpublished diary: "Saturday, April 27—Mr. Wesley preached at Bradford, at 5 a.m. At 10½, to the surprise of many, he preached in Bingley church, from Acts xxiv. 25. I never saw

[1] It is a disgraceful fact that Charles Wesley was buried, not at the expense of the London circuit, but by private subscription. Nineteen London Methodists subscribed £10 13*s.* 6*d.*, and William Marriott made up the deficiency of £3 3*s.* The pages in the old society book, on which this account is written, were wafered together by four large wafers, doubtless for the purpose of hiding the shame of the old Methodists of 1788.

[2] The following was written to Robert Dall, one of Wesley's itinerants.

"BANFF, *January* 1, 1777.

"DEAR FATHER IN THE LORD,—The society has been stationary ever since you left us. We are often neglected. Lately we had only one visit in eight weeks. Mr. Wesley was here on the 20th of May last, and preached on the Parade from 2 Corinthians viii. 9. He supped at Lord Banff's, and next night at Admiral Gordon's lady's house, with a great number of great ones; and, at their request, he preached in the English chapel to an elegant and crowded congregation. We are, etc., WILLIAM AND ISABEL MCPHERSON." (Manuscript letter.)

1776 Age 73 him weep while preaching before now. He spoke awfully, and the congregation heard attentively. The next day (Sunday) I heard him at Keighley in the morning, and then at Haworth church. Afterwards, the sacrament was administered, but in too great a hurry. Several hundreds communicated in less than an hour. We then dined, in haste and confusion, and drove off to Colne. I rode fast, and got thither before Mr. Wesley. The street was filled with people waiting to welcome him; but, when about two miles from Colne, his chaise broke down, which somewhat delayed his coming. He mounted a horse, however, and so arrived in safety. The crowd was so great that it was with difficulty we got into the church. The sexton led us to the reading desk, and thereby I got a seat. Mr. Wesley's text was Revelation xx. 12. At the beginning he was rather flat; but, at the end, he spake many awful things."

Wesley's journey to the north was always one continued panorama of toil and travel, preaching and praying, conferring with his preachers and visiting the sick. Hardly one in a thousand could have borne the burden of its labours without bending; and yet Wesley, an old man, was always, in the midst of gigantic toils, blithe and happy; and never went northwards without making his large circuit larger. Besides other places, he now, for the first time, preached at Chesterfield. Three years before, Jeremiah Cocker had gone from Sheffield, and stood on a table, in the midst of the market place, and begun to preach. A man, hired for the purpose, pulled him down. Jerry again mounted his rostrum, and was again pulled down. A third time he ascended, and a third time his assailant brought him to the ground. The old Adam now began to stir in the athletic preacher, and, seizing the man, he gave him a shake hardly gentle. "That is not the spirit of Christ," shouted the mob, which, all at once, had become pious. "I acknowledge it," said Jerry; and again he jumped upon his table, and finished his discourse.[1]

Wesley opened the conference of 1776, in London, on August 6, and concluded it three days afterwards. He writes: "In several conferences we have had great love and

[1] Manuscript.

unity; but in this there was, over and above, such a general seriousness and solemnity of spirit as we scarcely ever had before." "Everything," says Thomas Taylor, "was conducted in great order. A very strict scrutiny was made into every one's character; and I am glad so few were found culpable."[1] 1776 Age 73

The truth is, objections to the preachers had become so rife, that Wesley felt it to be his duty to interfere. He writes: "It is objected, that some of our preachers are utterly unqualified for the work, and that others do it negligently, as if they imagined they had nothing to do but to preach once or twice a day. In order to silence this objection for ever, which has been repeated ten times over, the preachers were examined at large, especially those concerning whom there was the least doubt. The result was, that one was excluded for inefficiency, and two for misbehaviour. And we were thoroughly satisfied, that all the rest had both grace and gifts for the work wherein they are engaged. I hope, therefore, we shall hear of this objection no more."

Even in 1776, as now, there were crabbed, cantankerous Methodists, to whom discipline was a blessing. Those in Ireland refused to contribute to the yearly collection, saying, it "was nothing to *them;* they would only bear their own expenses." This was worse than foolish; it was disloyal and unjust. In their own fashion, they were willing to feed and clothe the preachers sent to them; but they expected some one else to pay their expenses for travelling, and for the sickness of themselves and their families; or, perhaps, these Irish Methodists had dreamt that itinerants travelled without expense, and, so far as sickness was concerned and the need of medicine, were entirely exempted from the dire effects of Adam's curse. Wesley says, with honest indignation: "These are properly *their* expenses; nor will we pay any part of them for the time to come, unless their yearly contribution enable us so to do." If the Irish stopped supplies on one side of the channel, Wesley could stop supplies on the other side as well. This probably was a dilemma which the simple Hibernians had not studied.

There was another unpleasantness at the conference of 1776.

[1] Taylor's manuscript journals.

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Circuit stewards complained, that some of the preachers' wives were sluts, and spoiled their houses; and the preachers, on the other hand, complained that their houses were hardly homes, for the people, without ceremony, crowded into them as into coffee houses. Wesley dealt with both complaints in his own laconic way; directing that no "known slut" should have a house to spoil; and that no person, either on Sundays or week days, should go into the preacher's house except to ask a question.

The conference pronounced the opinion, that Calvinism had been the grand hindrance of the work of God; and, hence, to stop its progress, all the preachers were requested—(1) To read, with carefulness, the tracts published by Wesley, Fletcher, and Sellon. (2) To preach universal redemption frequently, explicitly, and lovingly. (3) Not to imitate the Calvinist preachers in screaming, allegorising, and boasting; but to visit as diligently as they did, to answer all their objections, to advise the Methodists not to hear them, to pray constantly and earnestly that God would stop the plague.

Was it wise to publish this? We doubt it; and so did Toplady, for he immediately, without note or comment, republished it in his *Gospel Magazine*, with the heading "Authentic Extract of what passed at a certain Confabulation, held at London, August 6, 1776."

The Isle of Man now began to attract attention. John Crook was the son of a Lancashire physician, who squandered his own and his wife's fortunes, and then died a miserable and untimely death at sea. John was put apprentice to learn a laborious trade, and then enlisted to be a soldier; when he was sent to Limerick, where, at the age of twenty-eight, he was converted, in the Methodist chapel, in the year 1770. Having purchased his discharge from the army, he returned to Liverpool, where he became a classleader, and a local preacher. At the beginning of 1775, he went, uncommissioned except by God Himself, to the Isle of Man, and began to preach, and had the lieutenant governor, and his lady, and all the family, and the chief people in Castletown, to hear him. Numbers had been converted; and persecution had begun to rage. On July 16, 1776, the following episcopal bull was issued.

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"*To the several Rectors, Vicars, Chaplains, and Curates, within the Isle and Diocese of Man.*

"REVEREND BRETHREN,—Whereas, we have been informed, that several unordained, unauthorised, and unqualified persons from other countries have presumed, for some time past, to preach and teach publicly, and hold and maintain conventicles, and have caused several weak persons to combine themselves together in a new society, and have private meetings, assemblies, and congregations, contrary to the doctrine, government, rites and ceremonies of the Established Church, and the civil and ecclesiastical laws of this island—

"We do, therefore, for the prevention of schism, and the establishment of uniformity of religious worship, which so long hitherto has subsisted among us, hereby desire and require each and every one of you, to be vigilant and use your utmost endeavours to dissuade your respective flocks from following, or being led and misguided by, such incompetent teachers, and to exhort, incite, and invite them devoutly to read the holy Scripture, to attend reverently the blessed sacraments of their parish church, and the ghostly advice of their own ministers, by which they will be better and more comfortably instructed in the meaning of grace and salvation, than by the crude and pragmatical and inconsistent, if not profane and blasphemous, extempore effusions of these pretenders to the true religion; and, if afterwards they regard not the truth, but obstinately persist in error, then to know and find out the names of such persons, within your respective parishes and chapelries, as attend the public instructions of the said disorderly and unqualified teachers, or frequent the said conventicles, meetings; assemblies, and congregations; and if, upon due inquiry and certain information, you discover, or, consistently with your own knowledge, know any licensed schoolmaster, mistress, parish clerk, or any other person, who holds any office or employment by licence from us or our predecessors, that you signify and make known to us in writing the names, within one month after the receipt hereof, as also unto our reverend vicars general or any one of them, of the persons who attend the instructions of the said teachers, or frequent the said conventicles.

"And we, likewise, further desire and require each and every one of you, in case any of the above mentioned unordained, unauthorised, and unqualified teachers shall, at any time hereafter, offer to partake of the holy communion in any of your respective churches or chapels, that you repel him or them so offering, and the minister so repelling them or any of them to give an account of the same unto us within fourteen days, at the farthest, as is directed in the rubric in that behalf.

"Given at Peeltown, July 16, 1776.

"R. SODOR AND MAN.

"P.S.—Let these be forwarded, in the usual manner, and the time of receiving and forwarding be noted by each of you. You will also take a copy thereof, and publish it, in English and Manx, at the usual time, in

1776 Age 73 your respective churches and chapels the Sunday next after the receipt thereof."[1]

Such was the *fulmen brutum* discharged at the poor Methodists from the episcopal battery of the Isle of Man. Twelve days later, John Crook wrote as follows to a friend at Liverpool.

"CASTLETOWN, ISLE OF MAN, *July* 28, 1776.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am now in hot war. The devil has stirred up the Rev. Mr. Moor, of Douglas, and made a firebrand of him, to set all the island on fire. This gentleman has set his schoolboys to work, to write chosen texts of Scripture against *false prophets, dreamers of dreams, running and not being sent*, etc. He has also picked up a ballad, written, I fancy, by the late Dr. Bowden, and has dispersed manuscript copies of it, and of the texts, among the populace, and put them into a most violent flame. The effect on us, as a society, is, we are hooted at, slutched, and stoned, whenever we go to worship God. Mr. Moor's scholars in particular, and the rabble of the town in general, gather round our place of meeting, and first sing the blasphemous ballad, and then proceed to throw dirt and stones at the windows and door. As for myself, when I come out, they plentifully salute me with channel dirt, with which they have often plastered me pretty well. When the scholars meet me at mid day, they curse me most horribly, and throw at me chips, hard pieces of mortar, potatoes, stones, or whatever comes to hand. But if this were all, we might do well enough; but this *brand* has communicated the infectious blaze to the bishop, who has issued a bull, dated, not Rome, but Peeltown, which was published in the churches last sabbath. I have petitioned the governor for liberty of conscience, but he and the bishop are so unanimous, that, he says, he will not interfere in the case, but wishes me to write a memorial setting forth my suit. I am not willing to do this, but have given Mr. Wesley an account of the matter, and hope he will direct me how to act.

"I am, your willing servant in the gospel,

"JOHN CROOK."[2]

Wesley replied to Mr. Crook as follows.

"LONDON, *August* 10, 1776.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—By all means, stay in the island till the storm be ended: in your patience possess your soul. Beware of despising your opponents! Beware of anger and resentment! Return not evil for evil, or railing for railing. I advise you to keep, with a few serious people, a day of fasting and prayer. God has the hearts of all men in His hands. Neither Dr. Moor, nor the bishop himself, is out of His reach. Be fervent in prayer, that God would arise and maintain His own cause. Assuredly, He will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able to

[1] John Crook's original copy. [2] Manuscript letter.

bear. Violent methods of redress are not to be used, till all other methods fail. I know pretty well the mind of Lord Mansfield, and of one that is greater than he; but, if I appealed to them, it would bring much expense and inconvenience on Dr. Moor and others. I would not willingly do this; I love my neighbour as myself. Possibly, they may think better, and allow that liberty of conscience which belongs to every partaker of human nature, and more especially to every one of his majesty's subjects in his British dominions. To live peaceably with all men is the earnest desire of your affectionate brother, 1776 Age 73

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Three years after this, the Isle of Man was a flourishing Methodist circuit, with 1051 members of society.

No sooner was the conference in London ended, than Wesley set out, on Sunday afternoon, August 11, for Cornwall. On his return, he spent, as usual, about a month at Bristol and in its vicinity. He began what, he says, he had long intended, visiting the Bristol society from house to house, setting apart at least two hours a day for that purpose. He preached in the church at Midsomer Norton, the rector making one of his congregation. Here an incident occurred which was characteristic of the man, and is worth relating. Wesley was entertained at the house of Mr. Bush, a local preacher, who kept a boarding school. While there, two of the boys quarrelled, and cuffed and kicked each other most vigorously. Mrs. Bush brought the pugilists to Wesley. He talked to them, and repeated the lines:

"Birds in their little nests agree,
And 'tis a shameful sight,
When children of one family
Fall out, and chide, and fight."

"You must be reconciled," said he; "go and shake hands with each other." They did so. "Now," he continued, "put your arms round each other's neck, and kiss each other." This was also done. "Now," said he, "come to me"; and, taking two pieces of bread and butter, he folded them together, and desired each to take a part. "Now," he added, "you have broken bread together." He then put his hands upon their heads, and blessed them. The two tigers were turned into loving lambs; they never forgot the old man's blessing; and

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1808, p. 103.

1776 Age 73 one of them became a magistrate in Berks, and related the occurrence with intense interest in after days.[1]

Having returned to London, Wesley set out, on November 13, accompanied by his invalid friend, Fletcher, to Norwich. He says: "I took coach at twelve, slept till six, and then spent the time very agreeably in conversation, singing, and reading. I read Mr. Bolt's account of the affairs in the East Indies. What a scene is here opened! What consummate villains, what devils incarnate, were the managers there! What utter strangers to justice, mercy, and truth; to every sentiment of humanity! I believe no heathen history contains a parallel. I remember none in all the annals of antiquity; not even the divine Cato, or the virtuous Brutus, plundered the provinces committed to their charge with such merciless cruelty as the English have plundered the desolated provinces of Hindostan."

The two friends returned to London on November 21; and, a few days later, Wesley started on his accustomed visitation to Bedfordshire, etc.; and, on the way, read the poetical works of Gray, whom he pencils as "sharp, sensible, and ingenious; but proud, morose, envious, passionate, and resentful."

After this, he made a tour through Kent; and then writes: "December 31—We concluded the year with solemn praise to God, for continuing His great work in our land. It has never been intermitted one year, or one month, since the year 1738; in which my brother and I began to preach that strange doctrine of salvation by faith."

The Calvinistic controversy was now in its last agonies; but, on the part of the elect, was as acrimonious as ever. Some one published a twopenny pamphlet, entitled, "A necessary Alarm and most earnest Caveto against Tabernacle Principles and Tabernacle Connections; containing the substance of an extraordinary Harangue and Exhortation, delivered at Penzance, in August, 1774; on an extraordinary occasion. By J. W., Master of very extraordinary Arts." In this infamous burlesque, Wesley is treated with as much ridicule as the anonymous author could command; and Toplady, in reviewing it, in his *Gospel Magazine*, of course commends it,

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1842, p. 136.

as "a delicate satire on Wesley," and hopes that "the cream of tartar, so ably administered by the anonymous physician, will prove a sweetener of the patient's crudities; and conduce to carry off some portion of his self sufficiency." Wesley, however, had been so "severely peppered and salted of late years," that the considerate editor of the *Gospel Magazine* benevolently intimates that he shall, on that account, refrain from adding to the pepper and salt seasonings, which "must often have made Wesley smart and wince like an eel dispossessed of its skin."[1] 1776 Age 73

This was bad enough; but there were other things even worse. Wesley's wife, (originally a not too respectable servant girl,) stole a number of Wesley's letters, and interpolated words, and misinterpreted spiritual expressions, so as to make the letters bear a bad construction. She read them to an elect party of Calvinists, and agreed to send them to the *Morning Post* for publication. Two masked assassins, who assumed the not inappropriate names of *Scorpion* and *Snapdragon*, furiously assailed him, in the London newspaper, professing to ground their charges against him upon his own private papers, which the woman, who was legally his wife, had put into their hands. A more infamous episode does not occur in Wesley's history. The charges were cruel insinuations, founded upon interpolated letters, stolen by a faithless woman, who, in order to defame a husband of whom she was utterly unworthy, not only committed theft but forgery, and then put herself into the hands of a set of holy Calvinists, who employed her perfidy and meanness in injuring the man whom, at the altar of the Most High God, she had sworn to love, honour, and obey. This is strong language; but the writer, knowing more than he chooses to make public, uses it with deliberate design. Charles Wesley, finding the use that was being made of his brother's papers, was in the utmost consternation, and went off in haste, wishing him to postpone a journey, and to stay in town to defend himself against his enemies. Wesley was as calm as his loving and faithful brother was excited. "I shall never forget," said Miss Wesley, "the manner in which my father accosted my

[1] *Gospel Magazine*, 1776, p. 475.

1776 mother on his return home. 'My brother,' said he, 'is indeed
Age 73 an extraordinary man. I placed before him the importance of the character of a minister; and the evil consequences which might result from his indifference to it; and urged him, by every relative and public motive, to answer for himself, and stop the publication. His reply was, '*Brother, when I devoted to God my ease, my time, my life, did I except my reputation? No. Tell Sally I will take her to Canterbury to-morrow.*'"[1]

On the Arminian side of the controversy, the chief, if not the only, publication issued in 1776, was Fletcher's masterly "Answer to the Rev. Mr. Toplady's 'Vindication of the Decrees,' etc." 12mo, 128 pages. Never was a bravo shaved with so sharp a razor, and by so adept a hand.

Except "An Extract of the Life of Madame Guion," 12mo, 230 pages, Wesley's only publications, in 1776, were the two political tracts following. 1. "Some Observations on Liberty, occasioned by a late Tract": 12mo, 36 pages. And, 2. "A Seasonable Address to the more Serious Part of the Inhabitants of Great Britain, respecting the Unhappy Contest between us and our American Brethren; with an occasional Word interspersed to those of a different complexion": 12mo, 18 pages.

The former was an answer to Dr. Price, a unitarian minister far more famed for politics than for preaching, who had recently published his "Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, the Principles of Government, and the Justice and Policy of the War with America." This was considered the ablest work, in exposition of the injurious policy pursued by England toward America, that had yet been issued. Within less than two years, eight editions were printed; and, in testimony of their approbation of it, the common council of London presented to the author the freedom of the city in a golden box. Thus, in fighting with Dr. Price, Wesley was far from fighting with a shadow.

Both of Wesley's tracts display, not only his wonted ability, but his profound loyalty to the government of King George, his benevolence of heart, and his intense interest in the

[1] Jackson's Life of C. Wesley, vol. ii., p. 283.

fratricidal war which was then raging. A more loyal subject than Wesley, England never had; perhaps, indeed, his loving loyalty sometimes made him somewhat blind to the faultiness of ruling powers. No man was more obedient to law; and no man more cheerfully paid his taxes. The last mentioned might not amount to much; but they were never tendered with a niggard's hand. Some imagined that he, the bishop of 40,000 Methodists, was sure to have an enormous income, and a silver chest well stocked with plate; and that, therefore, his assessments ought to be higher than they were. So, for instance, thought the commissioners of his majesty's excise, in 1776. Hence the following circular: 1776 Age 73

"REVEREND SIR,—As the commissioners cannot doubt but you have plate for which you have hitherto neglected to make entry, they have directed me to inform you, that they expect you forthwith to make due entry of all your plate, such entry to bear date from the commencement of the plate duty, or from such time as you have owned, used, had, or kept any quantity of silver plate, chargeable by the act of parliament; as, in default hereof, the board will be obliged to signify your refusal to their lordships. An immediate answer is desired."

Think of John Wesley, always on the wing, having a hoard of silver plate to adorn his sumptuous table when feasting his Epicurean coadjutors and his dinner loving friends. The idea was almost too silly to be ridiculous. Wesley seems to have thought it so; and his answer (with which we close the present year) was as follows.

"SIR,—I have *two* silver teaspoons at *London*, and *two* at *Bristol*. This is all the plate which I have at present; and I shall not buy any more, while so many round me want bread.

"I am, sir, your most humble servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."

1777.

1777
Age 74

WESLEY was always full of work. He began the year 1777 with a course of lectures on the book of Ecclesiastes, and says: "I never before had so clear a sight either of the meaning or the beauties of it; neither did I imagine, that the several parts of it were, in so exquisite a manner, connected together; all tending to prove that grand truth, that there is no happiness out of God."

He also spent an hour every morning with his London preachers, Messrs. Jaco, Hindmarsh, Murlin, Pilmoor, Atlay, Bradford, and Olivers, in instructing them as he used to instruct his Oxford pupils, and in promoting their piety.

He likewise begun visiting the society, many of whom he found in the deepest poverty, and writes: "O why do not all the rich that fear God constantly visit the poor? Can they spend part of their spare time better? Certainly not: so they will find in that day, when 'every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.'"

To his surprise, he once more preached in a London church—Allhallows; and says: "I found great liberty of spirit; and the congregation seemed to be much affected. How is this? Do I yet please men? Is the offence of the cross ceased? It seems, after being scandalous near fifty years, I am at length growing into an honourable man."

At the beginning of the month of February, he hurried off to Bristol, to quiet some of the society, who were in danger of becoming disaffected towards government; and preached from, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers." Finding that there had been repeated attempts to fire the city, he preached again, taking as his text, "Is there any evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" He also wrote and published, "A Calm Address to the Inhabitants of England": 12mo, 23 pages. He states, that a year and a half ago, "from fifty to a hundred thousand copies of

his "Calm Address to the American Colonies" had been dispersed, and the effect had exceeded his most sanguine hopes. This encouraged him now to address "the inhabitants of *Old England*." He then gives an account of the rise and progress of the American rebellion, tracing it back as far as the year 1737. He proceeds to state that, after bawling for liberty, no liberty was left in the confederate provinces of America; the liberty of the press, religious liberty, and civil liberty were nonentities. The lords of the congress were as absolute as the emperor of Morocco; whereas, in England, the fullest liberty was enjoyed, "both as to religion, life, body, and goods." He tells the Methodists that, though many, who go under that name, hate the king and all his ministers, only less than they hate an Arminian, he would no more continue in fellowship with those that were connected with him, if they did this, than he would continue in fellowship "with whoremongers, or sabbath breakers, or thieves, or drunkards, or common swearers." 1777 Age 74

The whole tract is written in his most pungent style; and, whatever may be thought of the wisdom of Wesley's politics, all must admire his devoted loyalty. Of course, like his "Calm Address to the American Colonies," it stirred a nest of hornets. Almost immediately, there was published, in the *Gospel Magazine*, a poem reviling him in unmeasured terms. He is represented as "spitting venom, spite, and rage"; "Father Johnny" is accused of telling "barefaced lies," and is thus admonished in the last two lines:

> "O think of this, thou grey haired sinner,
> Ere Satan pick thy bones for dinner."

Wesley returned to London on February 8, and, a week later, fulfilled a painful duty. For more than twenty years, Dr. Dodd had been one of the most popular preachers in the metropolis. When at the zenith of his fame, he, in 1774, sent an anonymous letter to Lady Apsley, offering her £3000 if she would prevail with her husband, the lord chancellor, to appoint him to the valuable rectory of St. George's, Hanover Square, which was then vacant. The writer was detected, and, as a consequence, was struck out of the list of royal chaplains, was assailed with bitter invectives by the press, and was

1777 Age 74 severely ridiculed by Foote, in a farce, entitled "The Cozeners." Withdrawing from England, where he had now become an object of contempt, he, for a time, found an asylum at Geneva, with his former pupil, Lord Chesterfield. On his return to this country, he became editor of a newspaper, and then a bankrupt. In 1776, he visited France, and, with little regard to decency, appeared in a phaeton at the races on the plains of Sablons, dressed in all the foppery of the country in which he then resided. Strange to say, he was still popular, as a preacher, at the Magdalen, in London, where he delivered his last discourse on February 2, 1777, from the ominous text: "And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind; and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life."

Only two days afterwards, he forged the name of Lord Chesterfield to a bond for £4200, on the security of which he obtained a considerable loan. Detection speedily ensued; and, before the month was ended, he was arrested, tried at the Old Bailey, and was convicted. The crime was forgery; the penalty was death. For four months, the unhappy culprit was kept in prison. His friends were indefatigable, in their endeavours, to obtain a commutation of his punishment. Even the city of London, in its corporate capacity, earnestly solicited that his sentence might not be carried into effect. Dr. Johnson, with his weighty pen, tried to arouse popular feeling in his favour, alleging that petitions for clemency had been signed by above thirty thousand people, and that justice might reasonably be satisfied with his imprisonment, infamy, exile, penury, and ruin. All was of no avail; and on June 26 the great preacher died a felon's death by the hands of the common hangman.

In the days of his prosperity, Dodd had been in the ranks of Wesley's enemies; and, more than once, had reviled him, his people, and his creed; and, yet, strange to tell, no sooner was he incarcerated for his crime, than he sent for Wesley to visit him. The latter writes: "1777, February 15—At the third message, I took up my cross, and went to see Dr. Dodd,

in the Compter. I was greatly surprised. He seemed, though deeply affected, yet thoroughly resigned to the will of God. Mrs. Dodd, likewise, behaved with the utmost propriety. I doubt not, God will bring good out of this evil." "February 18—I visited him again, and found him still in a desirable state of mind; calmly giving himself up to whatsoever God should determine concerning him." 1777 Age 74

Both Wesley and his brother had always evinced an almost unequalled interest in the welfare of imprisoned convicts; but, remembering past treatment from this popular, but now incarcerated, preacher, and also remembering the terrible scandal which he had brought upon Christ's religion, no wonder that Wesley felt it a *cross* to visit him. Wesley, however, was not the man to shun a duty because it happened to be painful; and there can be no doubt that, if his itinerant engagements had not taken him away from London, the gloom of the convict's cell would often have been relieved, during the next four months, by Wesley's presence.

Wesley had never even seen Dr. Dodd, either in public or in private, until he saw him in Wood Street compter, a few days before his removal to Newgate to take his trial. "Sir," said the prisoner, "I have long desired to see you; but I little thought, that our first interview would be in such a place as this." "We conversed," says Wesley, "about an hour; he spoke of nothing but his soul, and appeared to regard nothing in comparison of it." At the second interview, Wesley spent half an hour with the poor wretched man. "Sir," said he, "do not you find it difficult to preserve your recollection, amidst all these lawyers and witnesses?" Dodd answered: "It is difficult; but I have one sure hold: 'Lord, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'" The third visit was after his sentence had been passed. Wesley writes: "He conversed about an hour; but had not one word about any but spiritual things. I found his mind still quiet and composed; sorrowing, but not without hope." Two days before the execution, Wesley went again. "Sir," said he, "I think you do not ask enough, or expect enough, from God your Saviour. The *present* blessing, you may expect from Him, is to be

1777 Age 74 filled with all joy, as well as peace in believing." "O sir," replied the doctor, "it is not for such a sinner as I am to expect any joy in this world. The utmost I can desire is peace; and, through the mercy of God, that I have." Wesley adds: "We then spent a little time in prayer, and I solemnly commended him to God. He was exactly in such a temper as I wished. He never, at any time, expressed the least murmuring or resentment at any one; but entirely and calmly gave himself up to the will of God. Such a prisoner I scarce ever saw before; much less, such a condemned malefactor."

This was Wesley's last interview. Two days later, the once famous Dr. Dodd was hanged, Wesley expressing the firm belief, that angels took him from the gallows to the paradise of God.[1]

Perhaps more space has been devoted to Dr. Dodd than some may think fitting; but, remembering the positions occupied respectively by Dodd and Wesley,—the one the most popular and fashionable preacher that London had, and the other an outcast clergyman, who, for eight-and-thirty years, had been reviled in every form that malice and ingenuity could devise,—it was no slight fact, that, as soon as Dodd was face to face with death, the man he sent for was, not one of his old associates, lay or clerical, but the man who had been, and still was, the butt of national persecution, and whom he himself in the days of his prosperity had treated disrespectfully. Dr. Dodd, when he most needed them, had more faith in Wesley's counsels and Wesley's prayers than he had in the counsels and prayers of those whom he had been accustomed to call his friends. His confidence was not misplaced. Wesley did his best; Wesley's brother poured forth the feelings of his heart in "A Prayer for Dr. Dodd under Condemnation"; and Miss Bosanquet wrote to the poor prisoner not a few of her Christian letters. The result was, Dodd, on the very day of Wesley's final visit, thus addressed his lady correspondent: "My dear Friend,—On Friday morning I am to be made immortal! I die with a heart truly contrite, and broken under a sense of its great

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1783, p. 358.

and manifold offences, but comforted and sustained by a firm faith in the pardoning love of Jesus Christ."[1] 1777 Age 74

"On the 10th of March, Wesley left London on a seventeen days' preaching tour to Bristol and back again. This was the year for his pastoral visitation in the north; but, he writes, "I cannot be long absent" from London, "while the new chapel is building." In fact, Wesley became so interested in his great building scheme, that he was tempted to turn architect himself. "It seems," says he in a letter to Miss Ball, of Wycombe, dated March 13, 1777, "it seems, the time is come, that you are to have a more commodious preaching house at High Wycombe. I will give you a plan of the building myself; and employ whom you please to build."[2] After all, the Methodists at Wycombe might have had a worse architect than Wesley.

Ten days were spent in London, and, it being Easter time, Wesley writes: "During the octave, I administered the Lord's supper every morning, after the example of the primitive church." On Sunday, April 6, he set out on his northern journey, making collections, as he went, for his London chapel. When he had got only as far as Lancashire, he was obliged to return to London to lay the foundation stone on April 21. A week later, he took coach for Newcastle upon Tyne. Here he spent four days, and then again turned his face southward; and, preaching all the way, reached the metropolis on the 17th of May.

Having met the building committee, which was his chief business in London, and having, with his brother, visited Dr. Dodd, he, a third time, started north on Sunday, May 25. He now hurried on to Whitehaven, and paid his first visit to the Isle of Man, where he spent the first three days in the month of June, and says: "A more loving, simple hearted people than this I never saw; and no wonder; for they have but six papists, and no Dissenters, in the island."

Here he met with the Rev. E. and Mrs. Smyth, the former a clergyman from Ireland, and the latter a young

[1] Life of C. Wesley, vol. ii., p. 311.
[2] Memoir of Ball, p. 137.

1777 wife of twenty-two. Mr. Smyth had been ejected from his
Age 74 curacy for preaching the doctrines of the Methodists, and especially for daring to reprove "the great man of the parish" for living the life of an adulterer. Expelled from the Established Church, he began to preach wherever he had a chance, and became more extensively useful than ever. Though the nephew of an archbishop, his home was a thatched cabin, and his trials not a few. Hearing that Wesley was about to visit the Isle of Man, Mr. Smyth and his wife came to meet him. Wesley received them with his customary kindness, and, during their stay, met with a misadventure, which is worth relating. He writes: "I set out for Douglas in the one-horse chaise, Mrs. Smyth riding with me. In about an hour, in spite of all I could do, the headstrong horse ran the wheel against a large stone: the chaise overset in a moment; but we fell so gently on the smooth grass, that neither of us was hurt at all."

Such is Wesley's account; Mrs. Smyth's reflects on Wesley's charioteering capabilities. "He told me," she writes, "when we got into the carriage, that he could drive a chaise forty years ago; but, poor dear man! his hand seemed out of practice, as I thought we should be overturned several times. At last, one of the wheels being mounted on one side of a ditch, we were both pitched out on a green plain, as the Lord in mercy ordered it; for had we been overset in some parts of the road, it is more than probable we should have been killed on the spot. I found no bad effects from the fall at the time; but the next morning I was scarce able to stir, and felt so sore and bruised that I thought it likely I should lay my bones in the churchyard at Douglas." [1]

We shall meet with Mr. and Mrs. Smyth again; suffice it to add, that, immediately after preaching at Douglas, Wesley set sail for England; and, a few days after, his newly acquired friends went back to Ireland, while he himself went on his way to London. In his progress, he, for the first time, preached at Settle, where Methodism had recently been introduced by John Read, a poor clogger, and where one

[1] Life of Mrs. Smyth, p. 33.

of the first members was Edward Slater, who became Wesley's coachman.[1] 1777 Age 74

Wesley proceeded to Otley, where Miss Ritchie, apparently, was dying; to Bradford, where William Brammah, one of Wesley's weakest preachers, had been amazingly useful; to Birstal and Huddersfield, where thousands upon thousands assembled to hear him; and to Colne, where, as soon as he entered the pulpit, the left hand gallery of the chapel fell, with nearly two hundred persons in it.

William Sagar, a young man not then in business for himself, had been the principal promoter of this erection, and had made himself responsible for the payment of the cost. When the walls were half way up, the workmen became clamorous for their wages; and Mr. Sagar unfortunately was without funds; but, two or three days afterwards, a gentleman, unsolicited, offered to lend him the money needed. One trouble was got over, but another was yet to come. When the ill fated chapel was ready for the roof, a gale of wind blew down the western gable, and shook the entire edifice to its foundations. And now, to crown the whole, through the malevolence of a carpenter who had purposely cut the timbers too short, down fell the left hand gallery; and, though no lives were lost, yet not a few of the people had their limbs broken, and were otherwise severely injured.[2]

It was at this period that Colne was made the head of what Thomas Taylor called "a snug circuit"; though the circuit embraced the entire region constituting the Todmorden, Bacup, Haslingden, Blackburn, Burnley, Preston, Garstang, Lancaster, Clitheroe, and Padiham circuits of the present day. Taylor was the assistant of the circuit before it was made so *snug*, and was Wesley's companion at the time of the Colne catastrophe. In his voluminous unpublished diary, he tells us, that at Otley Wesley not only preached, but made a collection for his London chapel; at Bingley, he preached in the parish church; at Keighley, after preaching, Wesley stood on one side of the path and Taylor on the other, and, with their hats in their hands, collected upwards of £7 for the new

[1] Bardsley's manuscript letters.
[2] Manuscript memoir of Mr. Sagar.

1777 Age 74 chapel in City Road; at Colne, Taylor was with Wesley in the pulpit when the gallery fell. He writes: "Oh, what a scene ensued. The dismal shrieks of those whose limbs were broken, or who were otherwise injured, and the cries of the women for their children, were terrible. Happily no lives were lost, and much less damage done than might have been expected. As soon as the confusion was abated, Mr. Wesley preached out of doors; but the catastrophe prevented many from hearing."[1]

Wesley proceeded to Derby, where, strangely enough, another accident occurred, which might have been as serious as that at Colne. An hour before the congregation assembled in the chapel, part of the roof fell in; the people, however, rushed to hear, despite the doubtful state of the flimsy edifice; and, among others permanently benefited by Wesley's ministry, was Catherine Spencer, who, for sixty-four years, adorned her religious profession by "a meek and quiet spirit," and who died at the age of eighty-six, in 1843.[2]

Wesley got back to London on June 21, and, a week later, wrote: "June 28—I have now completed my seventy-fourth year, and, by the peculiar favour of God, I find my health and strength, and all my faculties of body and mind, just the same as they were at four-and-twenty."

A man, on his birthday, frequently reviews the past, sifts the present, and reflects upon the future. At this period Wesley wrote as follows to his legal friend, Walter Churchey, of Brecon, the birthplace of Thomas Coke.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—At present, I am very safe; for I am a good many pounds, if not scores of pounds, worse than nothing. In my will, I bequeath no money but what may happen to be in my pocket when I die.

"Dr. Coke promises fair, and gives us reason to hope, that he will, bring forth, not only blossoms, but fruit. He has hitherto behaved exceeding well, and seems to be aware of his grand enemy—applause. He will likewise be in danger from offence. If you are acquainted with him, a friendly letter might be of use, and would be taken kindly. He now stands on slippery ground, and is in need of every help.

"I am your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[3]

[1] Taylor's manuscript diary.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1844, p. 70.
[3] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 406.

Having spent nine days in London, Wesley set out, on June 30, on a preaching tour which occupied the whole of the ensuing month. Proceeding by way of Buckingham, he visited Oxford, Witney, Stroud, Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Worcester, Malvern; and then passed through Wales to Bristol, which he reached on July 28. 1777 Age 74

Here, on August 5, he opened his annual conference, and writes:

"As the report had been spread far and wide, I now particularly inquired of every assistant, 'Have you reason to believe, from your own observation, that the Methodists are a fallen people? Is there a decay or an increase in the work of God where you have been? Are the societies in general more dead, or more alive to God, than they were some years ago?' The almost universal answer was: 'If we must know them by their fruits, there is no decay in the work of God among the people in general. The societies are not dead to God: they are as much alive as they have been for many years. And we look on this report as a mere device of Satan, to make our hands hang down.'

"'But how can this question be decided?' You can judge no further than you see. You cannot judge of one part by another; and none but myself has an opportunity of seeing the Methodists throughout the three kingdoms.

"But to come to a short issue. In most places, the Methodists are still a poor, despised people, labouring under reproach, and many inconveniences; therefore, wherever the power of God is not, they decrease. By this then, you may form a sure judgment. Do the Methodists in general decrease in number? Then they decrease in grace; they are a fallen, or, at least, a falling people. But they do not decrease in number; they continually increase; therefore, they are not a fallen people."

These are weighty words. They show Wesley's deep anxiety to maintain the genuine character of the work in which he was engaged; and the test which he instituted was, unquestionably, under existing circumstances, logical and conclusive.

The principal propagator of the report, that the Methodists were a fallen people, was John Hilton, who, for thirteen years, had been an itinerant preacher. Dr. Stevens calls him "an honest but weak headed man." This is scarcely correct. Leaving his honesty an open question, John Hilton, judged by his publications, was far from being "weak headed." Wesley says: "He told us he must withdraw from our connexion. Some would have reasoned with him, but it was lost

1777 labour; so we let him go in peace." Hilton was no sooner
Age 74 gone, than he turned author, and, in 1778, besides an octavo pamphlet of 32 pages, entitled, "The Deplorable State of Man," he issued "Reasons for Quitting the Methodist Society; being a Defence of Barclay's Apology;" 8vo, 66 pages. Dated, "Melksham, 3rd month, 28th day, 1778." He tells his readers, that, "a year ago, Barclay's Apology converted him to the principles of the quakers;" and a broadbrimmed quaker John Hilton henceforwards was. Both his pamphlets are written in a plain, good, nervous style, and show, that, in point of education and mental power, he was much superior to the mass of Wesley's itinerants.[1] Hilton was not without talent; but like most who think themselves more religious than their neighbours, he was sour and censorious. "What I have lamented in him, for some years," wrote Wesley, in a letter, dated October 22, 1777, "is an aptness to condemn and despise his brethren. There is no failing more infectious than this; and it is much if you did not catch a little of it from him; otherwise you would hardly say, 'the body of Methodists are degenerated.' You cannot possibly judge whether they are or not. Perhaps you converse with one or two hundred of them. Now allowing two thirds of these to be degenerated, can you infer the same concerning thirty or forty thousand? Yet this I will allow, two thirds of those who are grown rich are greatly degenerated. They do not, will not, save all they can, in order to give all they can; and, without doing this, they *cannot grow in grace*, nay, they constantly grieve the Holy Spirit of God."[2]

Thomas Taylor was at the conference of 1777, and tells us that, on the conference Sunday, the morning service, in the Broadmead chapel, lasted from half-past nine till nearly one

[1] Mr. Moore says: "this good man was possessed of eminent ministerial gifts, but he fell into the mystic delusion. He then became high minded and censorious; and Mr. Charles Wesley, in his hours of depression, used too much to listen to him. The quakers were jealous of him, and kept him silent a long time, to his great mortification. But it was the very thing he needed, it was good medicine to heal his sickness. In one of his last conversations with me, he said: 'I would not have thy people to think of changing; they may be disappointed.' He was then in a sweet and humble spirit, very different from that in which he left us." (Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., pp. 273, 274.)

[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1807, p. 328.

o'clock; that, at five in the afternoon, Wesley preached to a large and serious crowd out of doors, and afterwards, in a full society meeting, "expatiated upon the rules, and said many useful things." He preached again in the evening of the first day of conference, but not longer than twenty minutes. On August 7, Taylor writes: "that great and good man Mr. Fletcher came into conference. My eyes flowed with tears at the sight of him. He spoke to us in a very respectful manner, and took a solemn farewell. Dear, good man! I never saw so many tears shed in all my life." [1] 1777 Age 74

Fletcher had sought health at Stoke Newington; but was now the guest of Mr. Ireland, of Bristol. Benson, his fellow sufferer in the Trevecca troubles, writes: "We have had an edifying conference. Mr. Fletcher's visits have been attended with a blessing. His appearance, his exhortations, and his prayers, broke most of our hearts, and filled us with shame and self abasement for our little improvement." [2]

This was a memorable scene. Fletcher, emaciated, feeble, and ghostlike, entered the conference leaning on the arm of his host, Mr. Ireland. In an instant, the whole assembly stood up, and Wesley advanced to meet his almost seraphic friend. The apparently dying man began to address the brave itinerants, and, before he had uttered a dozen sentences, one and all were bathed in tears. Wesley, fearing that Fletcher was speaking too much, abruptly knelt at his side and began to pray. Down fell the whole of Wesley's preachers, and joined in the devotion of their great leader. The burden of Wesley's supplication was, that his friend might be spared to labour a little longer; and this petition was urged with such fervency and faith, that, at last, Wesley closed by exclaiming with a confidence and an emphasis which seemed to thrill every heart: "He shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." [3]

The event verified Wesley's words; for though the pilgrim was already walking on the margin of the river of death, and had heaven's own sunshine shining on him, it was not until eight years after that he passed the gates of the celestial city.

[1] Taylor's manuscript diary. [2] Treffry's Life of Benson.
[3] "Anecdotes of the Wesleys," p. 272.

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At the conference of 1776, it was reported, that there were 3148 Methodists in America; in the minutes of 1777, America is not mentioned. Still, American Methodism was not dead. "I have just received two letters from New York," writes Wesley on January 11, 1777. "They inform me, that all the Methodists there are firm for the government, and, on that account, persecuted by the rebels, only not to the death; that the preachers are still threatened, but not stopped; and, that the work of God increases much in Maryland and Virginia."[1]

The war was raging with terrific violence; and some of the preachers, as Mr. Rodda, were not so wise, politically speaking, as seemed desirable: but, despite all this, Methodism actually spread and prospered. Thomas Rankin, George Shadford, and others thought of fleeing from the field of conflict; and it was only by Asbury's solicitation, that they were induced to stay awhile longer. The baptists too became a hindrance. "Like ghosts," says Asbury, "they haunt us from place to place." Wesley's political tracts also were a serious stumbling block.[2] A Methodist backslider enlisted three hundred men for the British army, was arrested, and hanged as a rebel against the government of his country.[3] Even peaceful, prudent, and loyal Francis Asbury was fined £5 for preaching at Nathan Perrig's; and, in October 1777, Rankin and Rodda returned to England; and Shadford soon after, leaving poor, persecuted, but faithful Asbury the only one of Wesley's itinerants that now remained at the post of duty, and preaching peace to the people by Jesus Christ.

And here let us pause to say, that a grander specimen of a Christian apostle than Francis Asbury the world has never had. Much as we revere the memory of Wesley, we regard Asbury with an almost equal veneration. Among the self-denying, laborious, Christian ministers of the past eighteen hundred years, we believe that Francis Asbury has no superiors, and but few that can be considered equals. And yet, how little does the church catholic, indeed, how little does the Methodist section of it, know concerning this great and grand, because good, old man!

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 398.
[2] Asbury's Journal, vol. i., p. 177.
[3] Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i., p. 440.

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The son of peasant parents, Asbury began to preach in Staffordshire, while yet a boy seventeen years of age; and, in 1771, came to Bristol to embark for America, without a single penny in his pocket. His first text in America was in perfect harmony with the forty-five years he spent in wandering through its woods and prairies: "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." As early as 1776, he made it a rule, besides travelling and preaching, to read a hundred pages daily, and to spend three hours out of every twenty-four in private prayer. Cabins of the most miserable description were, in thousands of instances, his happy homes; and often, when his horse cast a shoe in the wide wilderness, in the absence of a blacksmith's shop, this grand old bishop of the American Methodists would make a piece of a bull's hide, bound about his horse's foot, serve in the place of iron. His daily rides were often from thirty to fifty miles, over mountains and swamps, through bridgeless rivers and pathless woods, his horse frequently weary and lame, and he himself wet, cold, and hungry. For forty-five years, when steamboats, stage coaches, railways, and almost roads, were utterly unknown, Asbury made a tour of the American states, travelling never less than five thousand, and often more than six thousand, miles a year, and this generally on horseback; climbing mountains; creeping down declivities; winding along valleys, whose only inhabitants were birds, wild beasts, and Indians; crossing extended prairies without a companion and without a guide; fording foaming rivers; and wading through the most dangerous swamps, where one false step might have engulfed him in a boggy grave. Usually, he preached at least once every week day, and thrice every Sunday; delivering, during his ministry in America, more than twenty thousand sermons. His custom was to pray with every family on whom he called in his wide journeyings; and if, as sometimes happened, he spent more days than one in some hospitable dwelling, he was wont to have household prayer as often as there were household meals, and to allow no visitor to come or go, without asking, on his knees, that God would bless him. Besides an unknown number of camp meetings and quarterly meetings, this venerable man attended and presided over seven conferences, widely separate, every year;

1777 Age 74 and, during the same space of time, wrote to his preachers and his friends, upon an average, about a thousand letters. For this enormous service, his episcopal salary was sixty-four dollars yearly and his travelling expenses. Early educational advantages he had none. Most of his life was spent on horseback, in extemporised pulpits, or in log cabins crowded with talking men and noisy women, bawling children, and barking dogs,—cabins which he was obliged to make his offices and studies, and where, with benumbed fingers, frozen ink, impracticable pens, and rumpled paper, he had to write his sermons, his journals, and his letters. Not unfrequently did he, like others, suffer from the malaria of a new, uncultivated country; and had headaches, toothaches, chills, fevers, and sore throats, for his travelling companions. And yet, despite all this, Francis Asbury was by no means an unlettered man. He became proficient in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; read the Scriptures in the tongues in which they were originally written; was acquainted with several branches of polite literature; kept abreast with the history of his times; and, although not an orator, was a dignified, eloquent, and impressive preacher. Thin, tall, and remarkably clean and neat,—in a plain drab frock coat, waistcoat, and breeches, a neat stock, and a broad brimmed, low crowned hat,—this first and greatest Methodist American bishop rode on horseback till he could ride no longer; and then might be seen often hopping on crutches, and helped in and out of his light spring wagon as he still pursued his wide episcopal wanderings. Thus lived Francis Asbury, until, in 1816, at the age of threescore years and ten, he died, and was followed to his grave in Baltimore by about twenty-five thousand of his friends. Before his death, he solemnly enjoined that no life of him should be published; and that injunction, to the present, has been substantially observed; but, if the reader wishes to see his monument, we invite him to step within the living walls of the present Methodist Episcopal Church of America, and there, while surveying the grand edifice of spiritual order and beauty, we ask him, as the inquirer in St. Paul's cathedral is asked, to "Look around!"

This was the only one of Wesley's English itinerants left in America in 1777; but, though forsaken by his English

colleagues, he was not alone. At this very time, there were fifteen widely spread circuits; thirty-four itinerant preachers, who had been raised up by Providence on the spot; and not fewer than 6968 full and accredited members of society. In other words, though it was only eight years since Wesley's conference had sent out Boardman and Pilmoor, there were already more than one sixth as many Methodists in America as there were, at the end of thirty-eight years, throughout the whole of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.[1] 1771 Age 74

To return to Wesley. After the Bristol conference, he spent a week in London, during which he drew up proposals for the *Arminian Magazine*, and met the committee appointed to superintend the building of the new chapel, which was now ready for the roof.

He then, on August 18, hurried off to Cornwall; and then to Ireland, where, at Dublin, John Hampson and Samuel Bradburn had expelled thirty-four members of society, who were so dissatisfied with this act of imprudent zeal, that Wesley was obliged to go and give the contending parties a two days' hearing. On Saturday, October 18, he got back to London.

The week after, he spent in Oxfordshire. At High Wycombe he meant to preach, "but good Mr. James had procured a drummer to beat his drum at the window of the chapel," and thus, instead of preaching, Wesley could only pray and sing by turns, during the time allotted for the service. The next week was occupied in a preaching tour in Northamptonshire; and the fortnight afterwards in meeting the classes in and around London.

On November 17, he went on a flying visit to Norfolk; and, on the 23rd, preached in Lewisham church for the benefit of the Humane Society, which had been established only three years before, by Dr. Cogan and Dr. Hawes. Here, of course, he was the welcome guest of his old friend, Mr. Blackwell; and, during his visit, he dined with the celebrated Dr. Lowth, bishop of London, whose brother had married into Mr. Blackwell's family. "His whole behaviour," writes Wesley, "was worthy of a Christian bishop; easy affable, and courteous;

[1] Minutes of Methodist Conferences in America, 1795.

1777 Age 74 and, yet, all his conversation spoke the dignity which was suitable to his character." There is one incident, however, which Wesley, in his modesty, has not related. On proceeding to dinner, the bishop refused to sit above Wesley at the table, saying with considerable emotion, "Mr. Wesley, may I be found at your feet in another world!" Wesley objected to take the seat of precedence, when the learned prelate obviated the difficulty, by requesting, as a favour, that Wesley would sit above him, because his hearing was defective, and he desired not to lose a sentence of Wesley's conversation.[1]

The remaining five weeks of the year 1777 were spent, partly in the three counties of Bedford, Huntingdon, and Hertford; partly at Bath, where he laid the foundation stone of a new chapel; and partly in London, where he parted with Fletcher on his way to Switzerland. He says: "We concluded the old year, and began the new, with prayer and thanksgiving. Four or five of the local preachers assisted me. I was agreeably surprised; their manner of praying being so artless and unlaboured, and yet rational and scriptural, both as to sense and expression."

Such was Wesley's watchnight service at the expiration of 1777; no preaching, no exhortatory platitudes, but simply prayer and thanksgiving, offered by himself and a selection of his London local preachers. Wesley's successors have not improved on this.

It was during this memorable year, that a society was instituted, which was ultimately superseded by benevolent societies that yet exist. Six friends in London met, at each other's house in rotation, every Sunday afternoon, for the purpose of singing and prayer only. They were soon entreated to visit the surrounding sick, and, finding many of them in deep poverty, began to relieve their wants. To do this, they found it desirable to provide a fund, by contributing themselves, and asking contributions of their friends; and shortly a society was formed, sometimes called "The Willow Walk Society, near Moorfields"; but more generally and properly, "The united Society for Visiting and Relieving the Sick." A few years later, the "Strangers' Friend Society"

[1] Jackson's "Centenary of Methodism," p. 201.

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was started. John Gardner, a retired soldier, in his London visits, met a man in a miserable garret, dying of fistula. He lay on the floor, covered only with a sack, without shirt, cap, or sheet. The old soldier felt, as every one must feel, that to visit such cases, without relieving them, was not worthy of a Christian; and, returning home, he got fifteen of his Methodist friends to join in a penny a week subscription for such a purpose. His classleader, jealous of his class-pence moneys, instead of helping, opposed the scheme. Gardner, with a soldier's pluck, was not to be silenced by a subordinate, but wrote at once to Wesley.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—A few of us are subscribing a penny a week each, which is to be carried on the sabbath by one of ourselves, who read and pray with the afflicted, who, according to the rules enclosed, must be poor strangers, having no parish, or friend at hand to help them. Our benevolent plan is opposed by my classleader; therefore, we are constrained to seek your approbation before we proceed. We are very poor, and our whole stock is not yet twenty shillings: will thank you, therefore, for any assistance you may please to afford your very humble servant,

"JOHN GARDNER."

Wesley was the last man to stifle a project like this; and, hence, his answer "to Mr. John Gardner, No. 14, in Long Lane, Smithfield," was as follows.

"HIGHBURY PLACE, *December* 21, 1785.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I like the design and rules of your society, and hope you will do good to many. I will subscribe threepence a week, and will give a guinea in advance, if any one will call on me on Saturday morning.

"I am your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

The scheme was now fairly launched; "Strangers' Friend societies" sprung up in Bristol and other places; Wesley drew up their rules in 1790; and wrote thus in his journal: "Sunday, March 14—In the morning, I met the strangers' society, instituted wholly for the relief, not of our society, but for poor, sick, friendless strangers. I do not know, that I ever heard or read of such an institution till within a few years ago. So this also is one of the fruits of Methodism."[1]

[1] See *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 661.

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Such then was the origin of the present "Strangers' Friend Society," which, until lately, was patronised by royalty, and which employed, in 1868, three hundred and fifty-two voluntary, unpaid agents in its work of Christian benevolence; these good Samaritans, during the same year, paying 32,460 visits, relieving 6577 cases of distress, and, besides blankets, flannels, and cast off garments, distributing £1926 14*s.* in ameliorating the miseries of "the destitute sick poor, without distinction of sect or country, at their own habitations."

Considering Wesley's wide wanderings, his daily preaching, his supervision of societies, and his multifarious correspondence, to say nothing of his publication of tracts and books, the reader wonders how an old man managed to keep the thousand wheels of his vast machinery in motion; and, yet, in the midst of what to others would have been an unceasing and worrying bustle, he was almost as tranquil as a hermit. The following extract from a letter, dated December 10, 1777, is racy and unique.

"You do not understand my manner of life. Though I am always in haste, I am never in a hurry; because I never undertake any more work than I can go through with perfect calmness of spirit. It is true, I travel four or five thousand miles in a year; but I generally travel alone in my carriage, and, consequently, am as retired ten hours in a day as if I was in a wilderness. On other days, I never spend less than three hours, frequently ten or twelve in the day, alone. So there are few persons in the kingdom who spend so many hours secluded from all company. Yet I find time to visit the sick and the poor; and I must do it, if I believe the Bible, if I believe these are the marks whereby the Shepherd of Israel will know and judge His sheep at the great day. Therefore, when there are time and opportunity for it, who can doubt, but this is a matter of absolute duty? When I was at Oxford, and lived almost like a hermit, I saw not how any busy man could be saved. I scarce thought it possible for a man to retain the Christian spirit, amidst the noise and bustle of the world. God taught me better by my own experience. I had ten times more business in America (that is, at intervals) than ever I had in my life; but it was no hindrance to silence of spirit."[1]

Wesley's incessant labours were not the only thing likely to perturb a human spirit. As usual, he was still the subject of acrimonious persecution. In his sermon at the laying of

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1799, p. 564.

the foundation stone of the chapel in City Road, he gave a history of the rise and progress of Methodism, in which he stated, that Whitefield, by conversing with Dissenters, contracted strong prejudices against the Church, and that this led him to separate himself from Wesley and his brother. He also noticed the secession of Ingham from the Church; and the setting up of the college at Trevecca, which was really a school for training Dissenting ministers. His object, in all this, was to show that, though large numbers of reputed Methodists had left the Church, he and his societies still remained faithful, and were not deserving of the taunt of having formed a distinct party. "We do not," says he, "we will not, form any separate sect, but, from principle, remain, what we always have been, true members of the Church of England." 1777 Age 74

Whether Wesley was strictly correct in this will admit of doubt; but, unquestionably, he believed it to be the truth; and, as might be expected, it aroused the anger of his quondam friends. Rowland Hill worked himself into a rage, and published, in 1777, an octavo pamphlet of 40 pages, with the title, "Imposture Detected, and the Dead Vindicated; in a Letter to a Friend: containing some gentle Strictures on the false and libellous Harangue, lately delivered by Mr. John Wesley, upon his laying the first stone of his new Dissenting meeting-house, near the City Road." Wesley's sermon is designated "a wretched harangue, from which the blessed name of Jesus is almost totally excluded." Mr. Hill remarks: "by only erasing about half-a-dozen lines from the whole, I might defy the shrewdest of his readers to discover whether the *lying apostle* of the Foundery be a Jew, a papist, a pagan, or a Turk." He speaks of "the late ever memorable Mr. Whitefield being scratched out of his grave, by the claws of a designing wolf," meaning, of course, Wesley. He brands Wesley as "a libeller," "a dealer in stolen wares," and "as being as unprincipled as a rook, and as silly as a jackdaw, first pilfering his neighbour's plumage, and then going proudly forth, displaying his borrowed tail to the eyes of a laughing world." Hill continues: "persons that are toad-eaters to Mr. John Wesley stand in need of very wide throats, and that which he wishes them to swallow is enough to choke an

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elephant." "He is for ever going about, raising Dissenting congregations, and building Dissenting meeting-houses the kingdom over." "Venom distils from his graceless pen." "Mr. Whitefield is blackened by the venomous quill of this grey headed enemy to all righteousness." "Wesley is a crafty slanderer, an unfeeling reviler, a liar of the most gigantic magnitude, a Solomon in a cassock, a wretch, a disappointed Orlando Furioso, a miscreant apostate, whose perfection consists in his perfect hatred of all goodness and good men." "You cannot love the Church," continues this meek and elegant evangelist, "unless you go to Wesley's meeting-house; nor be a friend to the established bishops, priests, and deacons, unless you admire Wesley's ragged legion of preaching barbers, cobblers, tinkers, scavengers, draymen, and chimney sweepers."

Has the reader had enough from the "gentle strictures" of this young divine, not yet thirty-two years of age? Let him turn to the *Gospel Magazine.* In reviewing Wesley's sermon at City Road, the *Gospel* editor describes Wesley's Methodism as a "jumble of heresies, truly and properly called Wesleyism"; and nothing "uttered by Satan himself can be more *impudent* and more glaringly untrue" than when Wesley calls it "the old religion of the Bible, of the primitive church, and of the Church of England." For him to say, that Lady Huntingdon "labours to form independent congregations, is as gross a falsehood as was ever coined at the Foundery itself. Mr. Wesley's apostasy from the Church is a chief reason why her ladyship has justly discarded him; and her disavowal of him, of his Dissenting principles, and of his sectarian conduct, is the true reason, why he has the insolence to spit his venom against one of the most respectable characters that ever existed." "With a baseness hardly to be paralleled, Mr. Wesley rakes into the ashes of a man, whose name will descend with lustre to the latest posterity; while that of the Foundery wolf will moulder with his pilfered writings, or only be remembered with contempt and execration. O Wesley, Wesley, hide thy diminutive head! nor let the most pestilent *Dissenter* in the kingdom arraign the spotless memory of a *Churchman,* whose fervour and steadiness of attachment to his ecclesiastical mother have scarcely

been equalled in the present age, and never exceeded in any. The truth is, Mr. Whitefield was *too much* a Churchman for Mr. Wesley's fanaticism to digest. O ye deluded followers of this horrid man, God open your eyes, and pluck your feet out of the net! lest ye sink into the threefold ditch of anti-christian error, of foul antinomianism, and of eternal misery at last."[1] 1777 Age 74

This was tolerably strong; but it was not enough. The same periodical, in its review of Rowland Hill's polite pamphlet, begins thus: "Hob in the well again; or pope John once more in the suds! Seldom has literary punishment been administered with greater keenness and spirit, than in this pamphlet; and, surely, never was a punishment administered on a juster occasion, nor to a more deserving delinquent. When you take Old Nick by the nose, it must be with a pair of red hot tongs." The red hot reviewer reiterates the slander, that Charles Wesley offered the Greek bishop, Erasmus, forty guineas, upon condition that he would give his brother episcopal ordination; and continues: "Mr. Wesley's vile ingratitude to the name and memory of Mr. Whitefield deserves the abhorrence and execration of all good men." Wesley is "an unfeeling and unprincipled slanderer, a vile traducer," and, in fact, guilty of "an extreme of malignity and baseness, for which language has no name."[2]

Such scurrility as this, heaped upon an old man, seventy-four years of age, who had spent his long life in unparalleled labours to honour God, and to benefit his fellow men, is almost incredible. But even this was not the worst that the immaculate *Gospel Magazine* provided for its readers. In the same number, from which the above abuse is extracted, there is a long poem, entitled, "The Serpent and the Fox; or, an interview between old Nick and old John"; which strongly reminds us of a series of most infamous rhymed effusions which will have to be noticed in the ensuing year, and in which Wesley is always represented as a fox. The poem now published was not only foul, but, in the highest degree, profane. It would be a crime to reproduce it. Suffice

[1] *Gospel Magazine*, 1777, p. 182.

[2] Ibid. p. 337.

1777 Age 74 it to say, that, as if to aggravate its infernal features, it immediately follows a really beautiful hymn of six stanzas "To God the Holy Ghost." As a contrast, and to furnish a specimen of the medley often found in this Calvinistic periodical, we furnish the reader with the last verse of the thoroughly good hymn, and the first verse of the thoroughly bad poem. Addressing the Divine Spirit, John Stocker writes:

> "Thou my dross and sin consume;
> Let Thy inward kingdom come;
> All my prayer and praise suggest;
> Dwell and reign within my breast."

We shrink from the task of so closely annexing to such a stanza, the first, and by far the least objectionable, lines of the ribald poem of "The Serpent and the Fox"; but historical fidelity compels us.

> "There 's a Fox who resideth hard by,
> The most perfect, and holy, and sly,
> That e'er turned a coat, or could pilfer and lie;
> As this reverend Reynard, one day,
> Sat thinking what game next to play,
> Old Nick came a seasonable visit to pay."

Then follows a conversation, in which Wesley proposes to burn the Calvinists in Smithfield, as Bonner once burnt the protestants, and the devil promises, that, while Wesley shall be exalted "with state" to heaven's "third storey," all the Whitefields and Hills shall be "turned back from the gate."

Quantum sufficit! of Rowland Hill, both in prose and verse. What had Wesley to say to all this? In his journal he writes: "1777, June 26—I read the truly wonderful performance of Mr. Rowland Hill. I stood amazed! Compared to him, Mr. Toplady himself is a very civil, fair spoken gentleman! June 27—I wrote an answer to it; 'not rendering railing for railing' (I have not so learned Christ); but 'speaking the truth in love.'"

Wesley's reply was a penny tract of 12 pages, 12mo, with the title, "An Answer to Mr. Rowland Hill's Tract, entitled, 'Imposture Detected.'" He begins as follows: "In the tract just published by Mr. Rowland Hill, there are several *assertions* which are *not true.* And the whole pamphlet is wrote

in an *unchristian* and *ungentlemanly manner*. I shall first set down the *assertions* in order, and then proceed to the *manner*." This is the strongest language Wesley uses. Indeed, he writes as though Hill's pamphlet amused him rather than otherwise. Some of his friends, however, were not so lenient. Thomas Olivers rushed to the rescue, with his characteristic fire, and unmercifully put into the hands of the public a sixpenny "Rod for the Reviler"; and Matthew Goodenough, a mechanic, of Bishopsgate Street, published "A Letter to Mr. Rowland Hill," 12mo, 21 pages, in which he tells "the reviler" that he had used a vindictive style of which a chimney sweep might properly be ashamed; and, from his malign spirit and rude manner of attacking Mr. Wesley, he might be mistaken for the chief of Billingsgate. Hill, as a preacher, is taunted with ranting, and roaring, and squealing, and bawling, and twisting, and twirling himself about like a merryandrew; and is told that, though "a Pelagian Methodist stinks," it was a comfort that the name of Rowland Hill was "an odoriferous perfume, a charming nosegay, diffusing its fragrance wherever it appears, and sweetly and effectually extinguishing the fœtid exhalations of Pelagian ordure!" 1777 Age 74

Not only in the Welsh cobbler, but in the Bishopsgate mechanic, Rowland met with an Oliver; but, like a beaten bull dog, was not satisfied. He at once issued another octavo pamphlet of 45 pages, entitled, "A Full Answer to the Rev. J. Wesley's Remarks," etc., in which he humbly apologises for using too strong language in his former pamphlet; and yet, with a strange inconsistency, commits the same fault in this. Wesley is again accused of "pompous falsehood," "barefaced untruth," "ungodly craft," "of calumniating the living, and traducing the dead." "For full thirty years, Wesley had been travelling towards *Trent*, and was now got to his journey's end"; while Fletcher—poor Fletcher, apparently dying of consumption—had "published, at the end of his third volume, a most horrible manifesto, in language almost blasphemous, and had forged my brother's name" (Sir Richard Hill), "and mine, at the conclusion of it."

But here we must leave this doughty warrior, to whom

1777 Age 74 the very name of Wesley was what a scarlet cloak is to an infuriated bull. Some will object to the reviving of these disgraceful reminiscences. Our reiterated answer is, that, without them, it is impossible for the reader rightly to estimate the character of Wesley. If they reflect dishonour on Rowland Hill, we cannot help it. Rowland Hill was a public man, and, like all other public men, he must be content to pay a public penalty for his public crimes. Unfortunately, this is not the last we shall hear of him.

Besides those already mentioned, Wesley published, in 1777—

1. The sermon he preached, on April 21, at the laying of the foundation stone of City Road chapel. 12mo, 47 pages.

2. An Extract from his Journal, from September 2, 1770, to September 12, 1773. 12mo, 119 pages.

3. "A Short Account of the Death of Elizabeth Hindmarsh," a native of Alnwick, "who died September 6, 1777, in the twenty-first year of her age." 12mo, 12 pages.

4. "Thoughts upon God's Sovereignty." 12mo, 11 pages.

5. "A Sermon, preached November 23, 1777, in Lewisham Church, before the Humane Society." 12mo, 24 pages.

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NEVER in his life was Wesley the subject of a more infamous press persecution than in 1778. 1778 Age 75

First of all, there was a pamphlet published, in which Thomas Maxfield was pitiably preeminent. This mendacious publication asserted that, when Whitefield went to America, in 1741, he handed over to the two Wesleys thirty thousand people, whose hearts the Wesleys so turned against him, that, when he returned to England, not three hundred would come to hear him. It further alleged, that "vile contentions" followed, in which the Wesleys "raked the filthiest ashes, to find some black story against their fellow preachers;" and that what had been published, on both sides, by the friends of Whitefield and Wesley, within the last six years, was a disgrace to all concerned.

Wesley replied to this, in "A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Thomas Maxfield, occasioned by a late Publication": 8vo, 11 pages. He states, with perfect truth, that, at the time referred to, there were not five thousand Methodists in the world; that his own societies contained not more than fourteen or fifteen hundred members, and Whitefield's not so many. He declares that, so far from receiving thirty thousand people from Whitefield in solemn trust, the latter never delivered up to him one thousand, nor one hundred. He admits, that division followed; but affirms that Whitefield himself occasioned it. Whitefield first published a treatise against him by name; but he made no reply to it. Wesley asserts that Whitefield constantly preached against him and his brother, both in Moorfields, and in other public places. Even in the very Foundery, while Charles Wesley sat beside him, he preached the absolute decrees, in the most peremptory and offensive manner; but, instead of returning railing for railing, they always and everywhere spoke of him in respectful terms. And then, with respect to the publications of the last six years, Wesley states that, though the two Hills, and Toplady,

1778 Age 75 had poured upon him, in great abundance, bitterness, and wrath, yea, low, base, and virulent invective, he himself had published only three tracts during the entire controversy, and in none of them had he spoken one bitter, passionate, or disrespectful word. "Where," he asks, "have I, in one single sentence, returned them railing for railing? I have not so learned Christ. I dare not rail, either at them or you. I return not cursing but blessing. That the God of love may bless them and you, is the prayer of your injured, yet still affectionate brother, JOHN WESLEY."

Wesley's letter was worthy of himself. True, his statements, respecting his old friend Whitefield, are scarcely to Whitefield's honour; but it must be borne in mind, that they are not opinions, but facts; and facts not volunteered, but extorted by the falsehoods of Maxfield and those with whom Maxfield now associated.

Wesley replied to Maxfield; but the publications which must be next noticed were properly treated with the silent contempt they merited. We reluctantly advert to these vile productions; and yet, for the reason already repeatedly assigned, we must. Our notices shall be brief: first, for want of space; and secondly, because we can hardly make quotations without fouling our pages. The publications were seven in number, all, except one, printed by a man of the name of Bew, in Paternoster Row, on the best of paper, and in the best of type.

1. "The Gospel Shop. A comedy in five acts: with a new prologue and epilogue, intended for public representation, but suppressed at the particular desire of some eminent divines. By R. Hill, Esq., of Cambridge." 8vo, 88 pages. The chief *dramatis personæ* are Dr. Scapegoat, Parson Prolix, Mr. Rackett, and Simon Sycophant; and an idea of the whole of this infamous production may be obtained from two lines taken from the motto on the title page.

> "Beware! these dire illusions! strange to tell,
> A gospel shop's the very spawn of hell!"

2. "The Saints: a satire." 4to, 30 pages; with a frontispiece made up of two scrolls, labelled respectively, "Inspiration," and "Election," a bottle inscribed with the word "Gin," and a

satyr's head inscribed "Perfection." A Methodist is described as a mixture of ignorance and folly, piety and hypocrisy. The whole tribe are "downright scoundrels," "religious mountebanks," "wretches who make a trade of religion," and "show an uncommon concern for the next world, only to raise their fortunes with greater security in this." Two lines must suffice as a specimen, and, for the sake of decency, two of the words must be given in a skeletonised form. Of Wesley it is said, he

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> "Makes piety a b——d to aid his work,
> Outlies Sam Johnson, and o—twh——s a Turk."[1]

3. "Perfection; a poetical epistle, calmly addressed to the greatest hypocrite in England." 4to, price two shillings. Of course, Wesley was the hypocrite; and the work is ornamented with an emblematical frontispiece in accordance with its foul and calumnious falsehoods.

4. "The Temple of Imposture. A poem by the author of 'The Saints,' 'Perfection,' etc." 4to, 35 pages. This, like all the others, has a characteristic frontispiece, in which Wesley is represented as a huge serpent, labelled "The subtlest beast of the field." The serpent forms a circle, inside of which, among other things, there are four books respectively inscribed, "Koran," "Bedlam's Hymns," "Druid Hymns," and "Ignat. Loyola Monita Secreta"; also a gridiron, called "Mahommed's Gridiron"; a sword, inscribed "A Calm Address"; a bottle, with a burning candle in its neck, and labelled "Gin"; and two scrolls, one with the words "Old Light at Mecca," and the other, "New Light in Moorfields." The professed object of the work is to show, that, in tyranny, lust, avarice, persecution, and imposture, Wesley is a successor of Mahommed; and, in a bad sense, an improved edition of Ignatius Loyola. Wesley is accused of long seeking to be made a bishop. "Of all impostors since the flood," he is denounced as the very worst; while his preachers are "mechanic missionaries,—bawling, crafty, illiterate wretches, sent out by their priestly masters, to sow seeds of false doctrine and fanaticism, which spring up, throughout the country, in plentiful crops of idleness, beggary, madness, and sometimes suicide."

[1] The words in the original are given in full.

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5. "The Lovefeast. A poem by the author of the 'Saints: a satire,' etc." 4to, 47 pages. Here the frontispiece is a sort of chapel scene, in which Wesley, as a fox, dressed in canonicals, is having a mitre placed upon his head by the goddess Murcia, while a parson behind waves his wig and shouts "Hurrah," and another hurries away with an air of disappointment and disgust. Wesley's Foundery is described as "a spiritual slop shop," where he equips his "preaching lubbers" with all the necessary paraphernalia for playing their several parts; while the preachers themselves are designated "the worst of scum," "smugglers of Scripture phrases," "learning's sworn foes," "Jack Cade's apostles," and "mere conduit pipes of rhapsody and cant." The following are the last lines of the piece, and are used concerning Wesley himself.

> "*Feasts* he may institute, raise *holy* piles,
> Degrade his *God* to win a *monarch's* smiles;
> Permit *corruption* his *false heart* to taint,
> Live by *imposture*, and yet die a *saint;*
> But never while this hand can hold a pen,
> Shall he escape the *scorn of honest men.*
> Nor North, nor Mansfield shall the *wizard* save,
> But *ridicule* shall scourge him to the *grave*—
> There let him *rot*, (so Becket did before,)
> *Proud* as a *pope*, and faithless as a wh—re."

6. "Sketches for Tabernacle Frames." 4to, 36 pages. In this, the frontispiece consists of Wesley, again represented as a fox in canonicals, with the crosier of a mock bishop behind him, and round about a library of books, which he is supposed to sell, the shelves being labelled "Primitive Physic," "Political Pamphlets," and "Prayers, Sermons, and Hymns." Before him kneels a mechanic, with an ass's head, holding, in one hand, a bottle inscribed with the words "Primitive Physic," and, in the other, a pamphlet called "A Calm Address," while the poor asinine wretch himself is having his mouth opened by Wesley, who is about to indulge in the agreeable recreation of extracting his teeth. At the top of the picture are two portraits, one of James II., indicative of Wesley being a Jacobite; and the other of Lucy Cooper, indicating him to be something worse. The poem is dedicated to the "Rev. Mr. Evans, Mr. Hill, and Mr. Hawes,

in acknowledgment of their services to the public." After describing Wesley by such epithets as "a nostrum monger," "a preacher, pamphleteer, and quack," than whom "few can whistle off rank nonsense better," the work concludes with the two lines following: 1778 Age 75

> "His odious name should stink beyond the grave,
> And truth proclaim him a recorded knave."

The reader has had more than enough of these dunghill rakings; but, in order to be saved from the hateful task of returning to this series of abominable poems, we add another published in the year following.

7. "Fanatical Conversion, or Methodism Displayed. Illustrated and verified from J. Wesley's fanatical journals." 1779: 4to, 55 pages. In two different copies we find two different frontispieces. One is an ass, on its hind legs, preaching. The other is much more elaborate, and is too obscene to be fully described. Leaving out the parts referred to, Wesley, as a clerical fox, is represented as preaching in a barn, his right hand in the coat pocket of a man called "Old Cloaths," and his left taking a penny from a boy, a tapster, who has just been broaching a hogshead of "Culvert's Gin." One man approaches the preacher, with a cudgel, crying, "Give me my money!" Another, in the form of a donkey, is making a most hideous noise, and is called "Brother Bray." A third is vomiting a black monster, and represented as saying, "He's gone, he's gone!" A fourth is standing on his head, and shouting, "Sure I am in heaven." Two others are hurling a squib at Wesley's head, and flourishing a scroll, "For the benefit of Trick upon Trick, or Methodism Displayed." At Wesley's feet is the favourite bottle, labelled "Primitive Physic"; and in the centre is, what may be taken as the artist's name, "Rowland Hill, 1778." The following four lines, selected almost hap-hazard, are a very moderate specimen of all the rest. Of course, they are spoken concerning Wesley.

> "Reynard, you're right! Heaven loves such pious frauds;
> Hence, half your saints *unmasked* are who—s and b—ds:
> Nay, *mock apostles* are but little less
> Than devils lurking in *fanatic* dress."

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We gladly leave these disgusting publications. Like dishonoured children, they are without an acknowledged father. Who was their infamous author? We neither know, nor care to know; but there are three facts concerning them which must be noticed. First, in almost the whole of them there is a most virulent attack on Wesley's "Calm Address to the American Colonies." Secondly, though irreligious to a supreme degree, they are levelled, not against religion in general, but against that particular form of it espoused by Wesley. Thirdly, throughout, the Calvinists are either passed *sub silentio*, or with words of commendation; and, in footnotes and other places, Rowland Hill is evidently in the writer's good graces. We have read hundreds of tracts and pamphlets published against Wesley; but nothing which, for profanity, pollution, and violent abuse, equals these. They display talent; but talent prostituted to the most infernal purposes. In style, they resemble,—shall we say it? the style of one of Wesley's most calumnious Calvinian opposers; but we charitably, though feebly, hope, that no man professing, much less teaching, the Christian religion, had to do with their production.

What had Wesley done to merit all this? Nothing, absolutely nothing. He was an old man whose life had been spent in one great act of Christian beneficence. These wretched poems, issued in the best style of the art of printing, by J. Bew, of Paternoster Row, were the foul sputterings of a muse, not naturally ignoble, but envious of Wesley's majestic goodness, and animated with a feeling almost as malignant as the heart of Apollyon. So far from answering them, Wesley never even condescended to mention them, in any journal or letter yet made public.

Before we trace Wesley's wanderings in 1778, there are two or three other facts which must be noticed. On Tuesday, August 11, 1778, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, occurred the death of the Rev. Augustus Toplady. In more respects than one, this was a memorable event to Wesley and his friends. In the death of Toplady, Wesley lost one of his bitterest opponents; and Calvinism lost its ablest champion.

Soon after, the report was circulated, that Wesley had stated, to some of his friends, that Toplady died in despair

and uttering blasphemy. Sir Richard Hill rushed into print, by sending an anonymous letter to the *General Advertiser*, requesting Wesley either to deny the accusation, or to produce his authority, otherwise his character would suffer, "for having vented a most gross, malicious falsehood." Not content with this, he published a pamphlet, in the form of a "Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley," in which, as usual, he made use of the most intemperate language, telling Wesley that, unless he cleared himself from the charge alleged against him, he would be branded "as the raiser and fabricator of a most nefarious report," and would be guilty of a sin little less "than the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost." The whole of this mare's nest was simply this: Mr. Gawkrodger, of Bridlington, *told* Sir Richard Hill, that Mr. Thomas Robinson *told* him, that Wesley *told* him, that Toplady "died in black despair and blasphemy." If Sir Richard Hill had *courteously* asked for an explanation, Wesley, like a gentleman and a Christian, would have given one; but, having demanded it in the most offensive terms, telling him that he had been "vilifying the ashes and traducing the memory" of Toplady; and that "his grand design in all his publications, whether sermons, journals, appeals, preservatives, or Arminian magazines, was that of trumpeting forth his own praises"; and that he was "a man of cunning and subtlety, and artifices, and foul aspersions, and quibbles, and evasions,"[1]—we say, that Sir Richard Hill having used such terms as these, in the very letters in which he requested the explanation, deserved, not an answer, but, the silent contempt with which Wesley wisely treated him. 1778 Age 71

In 1778, England was in great excitement. Panic was general; and the country was thought to be on the brink of ruin. It was this state of things which led Wesley to publish the two political pamphlets following:

First, "A Serious Address to the People of England, with regard to the state of the nation:" 12mo, 28 pages; the object of which was to show, that England, notwithstanding the war, was in prosperity. Its cattle and vegetable productions were undiminished. Its inhabitants had increased a

[1] See memoirs of Toplady, prefixed to his works, 1857 edit.

1778 Age 75 million within the last twenty years; and, during the same period, hundreds of thousands of acres of unprofitable land had been put under tillage. England might have lost eight hundred of its ships since the beginning of the war; but it had also taken more than it had lost. The trade with Ireland had prodigiously increased; and, *comparatively speaking*, the national debt was not so great as in 1759. "Friends and countrymen!" writes Wesley, "let none deceive you with vain words! Let none, by subtle reasonings, or by artful, elaborate harangues, persuade you out of your senses. Let no sweet tongued orator, by his smooth periods, steal away your understanding; no thundering talker fill you with vain fears, of evils that have no being. You are encompassed with liberty, peace, and plenty. Know the public, as well as private, blessings which you enjoy; and be thankful to God and man."

The second, and shorter tract, was published, with the title, "A Compassionate Address to the Inhabitants of Ireland": 12mo, 12 pages. Wesley laughs to scorn the report, that General Washington had an army of 65,000 men; and says, that "the French will as soon swallow up the sea," as swallow up old England; that the Spanish have not yet forgotten Havannah; and that the Portuguese were "not such arrant fools" as to join in a confederacy with England's enemies.

These were odd topics for Wesley to take up; but the war excitement was now at its highest point. Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and Edinburgh raised regiments at their own expense. The Whig opposition considered this to be highly reprehensible, and accused Lord North and the other members of the government with employing soldiers without consent of parliament, and of entertaining designs dangerous to the liberties of the country. Fox moved, in the House of Commons, that no more troops should be sent out of the kingdom; alleging that a war with France and Spain was imminent; and that the navy was inefficient, and the militia contemptible. Burke, in a speech of three hours and a half duration,—said to be the greatest triumph of eloquence within the memory of man,—endeavoured to weaken the hands of government, by dwelling on the

ferocities and horrors committed by their savage auxiliaries in America, the red Indians. Lord George Gordon, who was not yet quite so mad as he became a year or two later, expressed his earnest wish, that Lord North "would call off his butchers from America, retire with all the rest of his majesty's evil advisers, and turn from his wickedness and live." John Wilkes, the ex-lord mayor of London, who had not yet attained to the post of city chamberlain, but who was engaged in constant manœuvres to escape out of the purgatory of duns, or to draw more money from the purses of private friends, was as lavish with his sarcasms, ribaldry, and drollery as ever, and told the minister, that nothing but a cessation of hostilities would save General Howe from the fate of Burgoyne. France was exerting itself to the utmost, to induce, not only Spain, but also Austria, Prussia, Russia, and the other despotisms, to become the allies and protectors of the young and free republic. The king and his ministers were involved in the greatest difficulties; and John Wesley, like a loyal man, at the head of forty thousand Methodists, felt it to be a duty to assist them as he best could, not only in private and in the pulpit, but also with his pen. 1778 Age 75

Having spent the first two months of 1778 in London and its vicinity, Wesley started, at the commencement of March, for Ireland, where he employed his time and energies till towards the end of July following; but there was nothing in the tour so *unusually* remarkable as to demand attention. The days of mob persecution were over; and everywhere Wesley was received with respect, and, in many places, with affection. At Tullamore, where he preached in the riding-house, the commanding officer ordered all the soldiers to be present, and attended himself, with the rest of the officers. At Cork, two companies of volunteers were present in the chapel, while Wesley preached; the side gallery being filled with the men in scarlet, and the front with the men in blue. In one instance, this old evangelist actually, we had almost said cruelly, drove a pair of horses sixty-eight miles in a single day. In another instance, coming to a slough near Sligo, a sturdy Irishman took Wesley over on his shoulders; and others took his chaise. At Dublin, his little conference

1778 Age 75 of twenty preachers debated the duty of leaving the Established Church; "but, after a full discussion of the point," says Wesley, "we all remained firm in our judgment,—that it is not our duty to leave the Church, wherein God has blessed us, and does bless us still."

This discussion was brought about principally by the Rev. Edward Smyth, already mentioned as a clergyman who had been expelled from his curacy for his fidelity to the truth. At present, he was in connection with the Methodists; and was now eager to persuade Wesley and his preachers to separate from the Church; but without effect. Myles, in his Chronological History, says, that the minute adopted was the following:

"Is it not our duty to separate from the Church, considering the wickedness both of the clergy and the people? Answer. We conceive not. 1. Because both the priests and the people were full as wicked in the Jewish church, and yet God never commanded the holy Israelites to separate from them. 2. Neither did our Lord command His disciples to separate from them; He rather commanded the contrary. 3. Hence, it is clear, *that* could not be the meaning of St. Paul's words, 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate.'"

This was an important action. Twenty years before, Wesley had wavered in his attachment to the Church; now and henceforth, in language at least, he was more decided. This is a question which will repeatedly present itself in succeeding years.

On July 19, Wesley left Dublin to attend his English conference in Leeds, preaching on his way at Liverpool, Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, Halifax, Bradford, and Birstal, at which last mentioned place his congregation was supposed to number twelve or fourteen thousand persons.

Wesley's notice of the Leeds conference is brief. He writes:

"1778. Tuesday, August 4.—Our conference began: so large a number of preachers never met at a conference before. I preached morning and evening, till Thursday night; then my voice began to fail; so I desired two of our preachers to supply my place the next day. On Saturday the conference ended."

Mr. Benson writes:

"Our conference is just ended, the best I was ever at. Mr. Wesley has been in a sweet spirit, has preached some excellent sermons, has had

extraordinary congregations, and has dealt closely and plainly with the preachers, setting two aside for misdemeanours."[1] 1778 Age 75

Thomas Taylor, in his manuscript diary, remarks:

"August 5.—To-day, we permitted all sorts to come into the conference, so that we had a large company. The forenoon was occupied in speaking upon preaching houses. In the afternoon, the sending of missionaries to Africa was considered. The call seems doubtful. Afterwards, the committee met, and we were an hour and a half in speaking what might have been done in five minutes. We are vastly tedious, and have many long speeches to little purpose."

"August 6.—This day has been employed chiefly in stationing the preachers.

"August 7.—We were engaged in conference till after one o'clock; and then the sacrament began, at which, I think, two thousand were present."

Three things are noticeable here. 1. Others, beside itinerant preachers, were admitted to Wesley's conference in 1778. 2. Long and tedious conferential speeches are not a novelty; but were inflicted upon impatient and unwilling listeners in former days as they are sometimes inflicted now. 3. The conference had an immense sacrament such as Methodist conferences and Methodist congregations now never witness.

Stationing preachers was then a difficulty as it is at present, one of the four days being chiefly occupied with this. Some modern Methodists seem to think, that Wesley, in this, acted as he pleased; but that is hardly true. The people then, to say nothing about the preachers, liked to have a voice in their appointments; and then, as now, not unfrequently made worse selections than others would have made for them. In the spring of the present year, Wesley significantly wrote, while at Bristol: "March 9—On this and the following days I visited the society, and found a good increase. This year, I myself (*which I have seldom done*) chose the preachers for Bristol; and these were *plain* men, and likely to do more good than had been done in one year, for these twenty years."

It is a curious fact, that, as this was the first conference in whose minutes the name of Thomas Coke appeared, so also

[1] *Christian Miscellany*, 1849, p. 84.

1778 Age 75 it was a conference remarkable for its discussion of the great question of Christian missions, to which Coke, soon after, devoted his unwearied life. The mission to Africa has been mentioned. Mr. Benson writes:

"The proposal was made in consequence of two young princes from Calabar, in Guinea, who desired that missionaries might be sent to instruct them in the English language, and the great principles of Christianity. These young princes had been cruelly torn away from their own country, and sold as slaves in America, where they remained upwards of seven years. An English master of a ship, to whom they told their story, pitied them, and advised them to run away from their master, which they did, and were brought by him to England. Their case was examined, and brought before Lord Mansfield; and they were set at liberty. They made some stay at Bristol, and were instructed by some of our people, but especially by Miss Johnson. After they had returned to their own country, at their request, two persons, who were Germans, but members of our society at Bristol, were sent out to Guinea; but they both died either before, or soon after, they landed on that coast. The young princes sent over petitions for others to go. Two good young men offered themselves for the difficult and dangerous service. But, after the matter was seriously considered, it was concluded that the time had not arrived for sending missionaries to Africa."[1]

One of the strangers, who were present at the conference of 1778, was Thomas Thompson, Esq., afterwards member of parliament for the town of Hull, and who, at the first missionary meeting, held at Leeds, stated that the discussion respecting this African mission lasted several hours, and was marked by deep piety, sound sense, and powerful eloquence. Mr. Thompson continued: "The deepest impression, however, seemed to be made, on the minds of all persons present, by the short speech of a young man, who appeared to be far gone in a consumption, but who promptly offered himself as a missionary, and, in unaffected language, declared his readiness to go to Africa, or to any other part of the world, to which it might please God and his brethren to send him."[2]

Who was this young man? Though not absolutely certain, we believe it was Duncan McAllum. At all events, the following information, hitherto unpublished, will be acceptable.

[1] Memoirs of Benson, by Macdonald, p. 75.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1814, p. 508.

The two African princes escaped from slavery, about the year 1775, after the breaking out of the American rebellion. One of them was baptized at Bristol; and the other was seriously disposed. The two Germans, who went out, were brothers of the name of Syndrum, and were treated by the uncle of the princes with all possible attention. When the intelligence of their death arrived in England, Dr. Coke addressed a circular to all the young itinerant preachers in the connexion, asking for volunteers for this African mission, and stating that they would be supported by a legacy of £500, left, for that purpose, by Miss Johnson, of Bristol.[1] Duncan McAllum was now in the third year of his itinerancy, and was stationed at Dundee. With a brave heart, he offered his services, even before the conference; but, without assigning reasons, Wesley declined accepting them. Hence the following hitherto unpublished letter. 1778 Age 75

"DUBLIN, *July* 14, 1778.

"DEAR DUNCAN,—I would have you change once in two months, and will help you as to the expenses. Dwell in the land, and be doing good, and surely thou shalt be fed. You have nothing to do at present in Africa. Convert the heathen in Scotland.

"I am, dear Duncan, yours affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."

So the matter ended. Help for Africa was deferred; but it is a blessed fact that Africans were being saved. The successful efforts of Mr. Gilbert in Antigua have been already noticed; and it is a remarkable coincidence, that, in this very year, when Coke first found a place in the conference minutes, and when, for the first time, missions to the heathen were discussed at the conference sittings, John Baxter, a Methodist shipwright at Chatham, felt himself constrained to leave his friends, and to embark for Antigua, principally, as he himself expresses it, that he "might have an opportunity of speaking for God." He landed on April 2, and, a fortnight after, wrote to Wesley, telling him that the work, begun by the late Mr. Gilbert, still remained. He says: "The black people have been kept together by two black women, who have continued praying and meeting with those who attended every night. I

[1] Manuscript.

1778 Age 75 preached to about thirty on Saturday night. On Sunday morning, to the same number; and, in the afternoon, to about four or five hundred. The old standers desire I would let you know that you have had many children in Antigua whom you never saw. I hope, sir, we shall have an interest in your prayers. Dear sir, give me your advice. Provisions are very scarce; but I have all things richly to enjoy; as I have four shillings a day, besides the king's provisions. I am going to have a house built for me, with as much ground as is needful. I think God has sent me here for good to the poor souls, who are glad to hear, but unable to maintain, a preacher."[1]

Little more remains to be said respecting the conference of 1778, except that it was resolved "to receive no more married preachers, because," says Wesley, "we cannot keep them";[2] and, further, that two most characteristic minutes were adopted in reference to preachers who were nervous. It was asked:

"Why do so many of our preachers fall into nervous disorders?

"Answer. Because they do not sufficiently observe Dr. Cadogan's rules —to avoid indolence and intemperance.

"They do indeed use exercise; but many of them do not use enough,— not near so much as they did before they were preachers. And sometimes they sit still a whole day. This can never consist with health.

"They are not intemperate in the vulgar sense; they are neither drunkards nor gluttons; but they take more food than nature requires, particularly in the evening.

"What advice would you give to those that are *nervous?*

"Answer. Advice is made for them that will take it; but who are they? one in ten, or twenty?

"Then I advise: (1) Touch no dram, tea, tobacco, or snuff; (2) eat very light, if any, supper; (3) breakfast on nettle or orange peel tea; (4) lie down before ten, rise before six; (5) every day use as much exercise as you can bear; or (6) murder yourself by inches."

Wesley acted upon his own advice. Whatever might be said of others, he was not the man to be made nervous for want of exercise. Many Methodist preachers claim and enjoy a holiday after conference. With Wesley it was otherwise. The conference of 1778 closed on Saturday, August 8;

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1788, p. 383.
[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 296.

the next day, Wesley preached to a congregation of some thousands in the market place at Dewsbury. He then hurried off to London; and thence to Cornwall, where he preached, in Gwennap amphitheatre, it was believed, to four-and-twenty thousand people. During this lengthened journey, he made the following curious entry in his journal. 1778 Age 75

"September 1—I went to Tiverton. I was musing here on what I heard a good man say long since: 'Once in seven years I burn all my sermons; for it is a shame if I cannot write better sermons now than I could seven years ago.' Whatever others can do, I really cannot. I cannot write a better sermon on the Good Steward, than I did seven years ago; I cannot write a better on the Great Assize, than I did twenty years ago; I cannot write a better on the Use of Money, than I did near thirty years ago; nay, I know not that I can write a better on the Circumcision of the Heart, than I did five-and-forty years ago. Perhaps, indeed, I may have read five or six hundred books more than I had then, and may know a little more history, or natural philosophy, than I did; but I am not sensible that this has made any essential addition to my knowledge in divinity. Forty years ago, I knew and preached every Christian doctrine which I preach now."

Let the reader ponder this entry for a threefold purpose. (1) To form an estimate of the extent of Wesley's reading. (2) To ascertain which sermons Wesley thought his best. (3) To find an answer to the charge that Wesley changed his doctrines.

Wesley, on his return from Cornwall, arrived on September 4 in Bristol, in the neighbourhood of which he spent the ensuing month.

The remainder of the year was occupied in London, and in his usual tours through the counties of Buckingham, Oxford, Bedford, Northampton, Hertford, and Kent; and it may be mentioned, as an evidence that the Church of England began at last to appreciate its ejected minister, that, during this interval, he preached, by request, to crowded congregations, in not fewer than four of the London churches.

It was at this time, also, that he opened, as already noticed, the new chapel in City Road. On the day of opening, he wrote as follows to Mrs. Penelope Cousins.

"LONDON, *November* 1, 1778.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—It is just as it should be. I have formerly said 'I wonder how Mr. Whitefield can go on! For he has honour, and comparatively, no dishonour. And this is test for human frailty too

1778 Age 75 severe.' Now I have not that insupportable burden. I have honour enough in all reason; but it is properly balanced with dishonour. I have good report, and (what is absolutely necessary) evil report too. To-day I am to open our new chapel. Hence also will arise both honour and dishonour. Yet a little while, and all these things, that seem considerable now, will pass away like a dream.

"I am, my dear Penny, yours affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

The opening of City Road chapel rendered it necessary, that Wesley should have clerical coadjutors; and he now received a letter from one who, in after years, rendered faithful and valuable service. The Rev. James Creighton was born in Ireland, in 1739; and, for fourteen years, had been an ordained clergyman; but it was only within the last two years that he had found peace with God, through faith in Jesus Christ, and that principally by reading the works of Wesley. He now began to preach in a barn, about four miles from his parish church; and, then, when the barn was no longer available, in a chapel which was erected for him, and in which he officiated for some time, though the windows were unglazed, and the mudden floor was such that his feet often sunk two inches deep during the performance of service. His parish was sixteen miles in length, and most of it mountainous and boggy; but he frequently walked, as well as rode, through all parts of it, in all kinds of weather.[2] While here, he wrote the following to Wesley.

"BELTERBELT, *October* 26, 1778.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I stand much in need of a judicious friend. I am quite alone; there are none of the Methodists near me; nor are there any yet thoroughly awakened within my cure. The fault, I must own, is mine. I have not been zealous enough; yet, this has not proceeded from the fear of man; but I wished not to act precipitately, and to raise the prejudices of the clergy as little as possible. I meant well; but I see I have acted wrong. Had I been persecuted, I should have been much bolder; but the people are so civil to me, that it has, in a great measure, proved my ruin. I have had such a sense of my ignorance and inability, that I have been frequently tempted to think, I ought to refrain entirely from preaching. But, again, I thought I might, perhaps, be of some use here, where the people are ready to listen to me, yet are not willing to hear a Methodist. Could I once open a door here for the Methodist

[1] *Christian Miscellany*, 1850, p. 54.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1785.

preachers, I should willingly go to any part of the globe that God should call me to. Were I near you, I should be too happy to fill the place of your assistant. Though we must lament the want of discipline in our Church, and though I admire the economy of the Methodists, yet I entirely agree with you, that they ought not to leave the Church. So long as they mingle with the members of it, they may be the means of converting them; but, if they separate, they will thereby stop the ears and eyes of thousands. These were my sentiments long before I heard that they were yours. I never was bigoted to opinions, and hope I never shall. 1778 Age 75

"I remain, dear sir, your very humble servant, and affectionate brother,

"JAMES CREIGHTON."[1]

The discipline of the Church of England was a thing over which Wesley and his friends had no control. With the discipline of the Methodists it was otherwise. Hence, the following characteristic letter, hitherto unpublished, addressed to one of his itinerants, at Brecon, Mr. William Church, an ancestor of the Rev. Henry L. Church, who possesses the original.

"WALLINGFORD, *October* 13, 1778.

"DEAR BILLY,—The soul and the body make a man; the Spirit and discipline make a Christian. Let John Watson and you agree together, and be exact in this wherever you go. Insist upon the observance of all the society rules, by all the members of society; and on the observance of all (even the least) of the band rules, by all that meet in band. I give, for instance, no band tickets to any woman, who wears either ruffles or a high crowned cap. If any will not lay aside these, rather than lose that blessed means of improvement, she is not worthy of it.

"I am, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Another unpublished letter, of the same kind, addressed to Samuel Bradburn, will be welcome.

"LONDON, *October* 17, 1778.

"DEAR SAMMY,—I think you judge exactly right. You are called to obey *me*, as a son in the gospel. But who can prove, that you are so called to obey any other person? What I require (according to the twelfth rule of a helper) of John Hampson and you, is, that each of you, in his turn, spend four weeks, and no more, first at Cork, and then at Bandon. When, therefore, you have been at Bandon, I desire you to return straight to Cork. And, if John Hampson will not then go to Bandon, I will order one that will. Pray show this letter to Mr. Mackrie, whom I beg to assist you in this matter. Pass smoothly over the

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1788, p. 608.

1778 Age 75 perverseness of those you have to do with, and go straight forward. It is abundantly sufficient, that you have the testimony of a good conscience towards God.

"I am, dear Sammy, yours affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Reference is made, in Mr. Creighton's letter, to the subject of the Methodists leaving the Established Church; and it has been already seen, that this was a matter earnestly debated, at the Dublin conference, during the present year. The following letter, sent to Miss Bishop, is of great importance, and, though long, must have insertion.

"LONDON, *October* 18, 1778.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—The original Methodists were all of the Church of England; and the more awakened they were, the more zealously they adhered to it, in every point, both of doctrine and discipline. Hence, we inserted in the very first rules of our society, 'they that leave the Church leave us.' And this we did, not as a point of prudence, but a point of conscience. We believed it unlawful to separate from the Church, unless sinful terms of communion were imposed. Just as did Mr. Philip Henry, and most of those holy men that were contemporary with him.

"'But the ministers of it do not preach the gospel.' Neither do some of the independent or anabaptist ministers. Calvinism is not the gospel: nay, it is further from it, than most of the sermons I hear at the church. These are very frequently unevangelical, but they are not anti-evangelical. Few of the Methodists are now in danger of imbibing error from the Church ministers; but they are in great danger of imbibing the grand error, Calvinism, from some of the Dissenting ministers. Perhaps thousands have done it already; most of whom have drawn back to perdition. I see more instances of this than any one else can do; and, on this ground also, exhort all who would keep to the Methodists, and from Calvinism, to go to the church, and not to the meeting.

"But to speak freely: I myself find more life in the Church prayers, than in any formal extemporary prayers of Dissenters. Nay, I find more profit in sermons on either good tempers, or good works, than in what are vulgarly called gospel sermons. The term has now become a mere cant word: I wish none of our society would use it. It has no determinate meaning. Let but a pert, self sufficient animal, that has neither sense nor grace, bawl out something about Christ, or His blood, or justification by faith, and his hearers cry out, 'What a fine gospel sermon!' Surely the Methodists have not so learned Christ! We know no gospel without salvation from sin. There is a Romish error which many protestants swallow unawares. It is an avowed doctrine of the Romish church, that the 'pure intention of the minister is essential to the validity of the sacraments.' If so, we ought not to attend the ministrations of an unholy man. But in flat opposition to this, our Church teaches, in the twenty-eighth article, that 'the unworthiness of the minister does not hinder the

validity of the sacraments.' Although, therefore, there are many disagreeable circumstances, yet, I advise all our friends to keep to the Church. God has surely raised us up for the Church chiefly, that a little leaven may leaven the whole lump. I wish you would seriously consider that little tract, 'Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England.' These reasons were never yet answered; I believe, they never will. 1778 Age 7

"I am, my dear sister, yours very affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Whatever may be thought of the validity of Wesley's reasons, there can be no question, that, in theory at least, he was still firmly attached to the Established Church. His enemies, not without reason, stigmatised him as a Dissenter; he persisted, that he himself and the Methodists were not Dissenters. Who is possessed of competent authority to decide the doubt?

Before passing to Wesley's publications, there is another matter which deserves attention. One of the questions proposed at the conference of 1778 was,—"Is it not advisable for us to visit all the jails we can?" The answer was,—"By all means. There cannot be a greater charity." From the first, this was a duty to which Wesley and his brother had devoted themselves to the utmost of their power; and so also had many of their preachers and followers, especially Silas Told, a man who richly deserves a passing notice.

Mr. Told was the son of a physician at Bristol, where he was born in 1711. At the age of fourteen, he was bound apprentice as a sailor; and, for eleven years, lived a life of adventurous romance. In 1740, Charles Casper Greaves, a young bricklayer, introduced him to the Methodists. In 1744, Silas, at Wesley's request, became the master of the Foundery school, and received a salary of £26 a year. At the same time, he began to visit the London prisons, and to preach to debtors and malefactors. There was not a prison in the metropolis, nor scarcely a workhouse within twelve miles round it, where Silas Told was not a frequent and welcome visitor. The scenes he witnessed were horrible; but for these the reader must turn to Told's autobiography. Suffice it to add, that Silas Told was pre-eminently, in London, the prison philanthropist, the real,

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 33.

1778 Age 75 though unrecognised chaplain of all its wretched prisoners. For more than thirty years, no man was better known, or more welcome in the jails of the metropolis, than he. All sorts of criminals, papists and protestants, clung to him in their anguish, for counsel and consolation. Notwithstanding opposition at the first, he persisted in his enterprise, till even turnkeys, sheriffs, and hangmen, as well as prisoners, were wont to weep while listening to his exhortations and his prayers. Silas Told continued his great good work, till he tottered under the weight of nearly threescore years and ten, when he peacefully expired in December 1778. It was befitting that Wesley himself should inter such a Methodist. He writes: "1778, Sunday, December 30—I buried what was mortal of honest Silas Told. For many years, he attended the malefactors in Newgate, without fee or reward; and I suppose no man for this hundred years has been so successful in that melancholy office. God had given him peculiar talents for it; and he had amazing success therein. The greatest part of those whom he attended died in peace, and many of them in the triumph of faith."

Several of Wesley's publications in 1778 have been already mentioned; only two still require notice.

The first was "Some Account of the late Work of God in North America, in a Sermon on Ezekiel i. 16." 12mo, 23 pages. It was almost a misnomer to designate this a sermon; but it was vastly popular, and, before the year was out, reached a second edition. It is really a brief historical statement of American affairs from 1736 to 1778. Wesley begins with the colonisation of Georgia, passes on to the wonderful revival of religion in New England, and speaks of the amazingly successful labours of Whitefield, but affirms that, for want of forming his converts into societies, the far greater part of them became backsliders. He then traces the war to its origin, and concludes by foretelling, not the *independency* of the rebellious colonists, which he says would be "a heavy curse," but a restoration of civil and Christian liberty. It is dangerous to turn prophet: in one respect, Wesley's vaticination was soon falsified.

On August 14, 1777, Wesley wrote: "I drew up proposals for the *Arminian Magazine*." We are not aware that these

"Proposals" have ever been reissued, just as Wesley published them; and, as an original copy now lies before us, we insert the document *verbatim.* 1778 Age 75

"*Proposals for printing, by Subscription, the* ARMINIAN MAGAZINE; *consisting of Extracts, and Original Treatises on Universal Redemption.*

"CONDITIONS.

"1. A number, containing 80 pages, in octavo, printed on fine paper, and with a new type, will be delivered monthly to each subscriber, at the price of one shilling.

"2. It will be so printed, as to bind up in volumes, twelve numbers in a volume.

"3. This work will contain no news, no politics, no personal invectives, nothing offensive either to religion, decency, good nature, or good manners.

"4. The first number will be delivered on January 1, 1778, and continued the first day of every month.

"5. Subscriptions are taken in at the Foundery, London; the New Room, Bristol; and by the booksellers in town and country.

"*To the Reader.*

"1. Amidst the multitude of magazines which now swarm in the world, there was one, a few years ago, termed *The Christian Magazine,* which was of great use to mankind, and did honour to the publishers. But it was soon discontinued, to the regret of many serious and sensible persons. In the room of it, started up a miscreated phantom, called *The Spiritual Magazine;* and, not long after, its twin sister, oddly called *The Gospel Magazine.* Both of these are intended to show, that God is not *loving to every man,* that *His mercy is* not *over all His works;* and, consequently, that Christ *did* not *die for all,* but for one in ten, for the elect only.

"2. This comfortable doctrine, the sum of which, proposed in plain English, is, God before the foundation of the world absolutely and irrevocably decreed, that 'some men shall be saved, do what they will, and the rest be damned, do what they can,' has, by these tracts, been spread throughout the land, with the utmost diligence. And these champions of it have, from the beginning, proceeded in a manner worthy of their cause. They have paid no more regard to good nature, decency, or good manners, than to reason or truth. All these they set utterly at defiance. Without any deviation from their plan, they have defended their dear decrees, with arguments worthy of Bedlam, and with language worthy of Billingsgate.

"3. In the *Arminian Magazine* a very different opinion will be defended, in a very different manner. We maintain, that God *willeth all men to be saved,* by *speaking the truth in love;* by arguments and illustrations drawn, partly from Scripture, partly from reason; proposed in as inoffensive a manner as the nature of the thing will permit. Not that we expect those on the other side of the question will use *us* as we use *them.*

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Yet, we hope, nothing will move us to return evil for evil; or, however provoked, to render railing for railing.

"4. Our design is, to publish some of the most remarkable tracts on the universal love of God, and His willingness to save *all men* from *all sin*, which have been wrote in this and the last century. Some of these are now grown very scarce; some have not appeared in *English* before. To these will be added original pieces, wrote either directly upon this subject, or on those which are equally opposed by the patrons of *particular redemption*. We are not yet determined, whether to insert any poetry or not; but we faithfully promise not to insert any *doggrel*. If any verses are inserted, they shall be such as will not shock either the understanding or the taste of the serious reader.

"5. We know nothing more proper to introduce a work of this kind than a sketch of the life and death of *Arminius;* a person, with whom those, who mention his name with the utmost indignity, are commonly quite unacquainted, of whom they know no more than of *Hermes Trismegistus.*"

This, though lengthy, is too scarce and too curious a document to withhold from the Methodist community; moreover, it was the commencement of a magazine, now, we believe, the oldest religious periodical in the world; a magazine which has flourished, without interruption, for ninety successive years; and has been read by myriads in all quarters of the globe.

It has been said, that Mr. Walter Churchey, of Brecon, was the first to suggest to Wesley the publication of this periodical;[1] Wesley himself says, that he had been desired to publish a magazine for near forty years before he complied with the request.[2] Of course, Wesley is the best authority; still there can be no doubt, that Mr. Churchey was one of his advisers. The following letter furnishes evidence of this.

"LONDON, *October* 18, 1777.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—We agree, that no politics shall have a place in the *Arminian Magazine*. But poetry will; only my brother and I are the judges what pieces shall be admitted. It may be, some will think us too nice in our choice; but that we cannot help. As to a review of religious books, it might be well; but I have two objections. (1) I scruple my own sufficiency for the work. (2) I would not, at any price, be bound to read over all the present religious productions of the press. "I am your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[3]

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1823, p. 134.
[2] Wesley's Works, vol. iv., p. 107. [3] Ibid. vol. xii., p. 407.

The first number of the magazine appeared on the 1st of January, 1778; on the cover of which Wesley said: 1778 Age 75

"I am content this magazine should stand or fall by its own intrinsic value. If it is a compound of falsehood, ribaldry, and nonsense, let it sink into oblivion. If it contains only the words of truth and soberness, then let it meet with a favourable reception. It will easily be observed, that it contains fewer articles than any other magazine. This is not by accident, but design. I have frequently been disgusted by the many bits and scraps of various kinds, which make up a great part of most publications of this nature. Before one has well entered upon any subject, it is at an end, and referred to the next number; a mere trick to decoy the reader to buy another and another number. On the contrary, I shall endeavour to begin and conclude as many things as possible in each number: and, with regard to taking the numbers that follow, let every reader use his own discretion."

Space forbids any lengthened outline of the contents of the first volume. There are lives of Arminius, Luther, Bernard Gilpin, Bishop Bedell, Peter Jaco, and John Atlay. There are half-a-dozen articles on the Calvinian controversy, some of them, (rather in contradiction of Wesley's announcement,) running through several numbers. There are fifty-nine letters; and nearly the same number of poetic pieces. There are three portraits, one of Wesley himself, one of Peter Jaco, and the third of John Atlay. At the end of the copy now before us, is a four paged letter, dated Londonderry, June 5, 1778, answering objections against the five numbers already issued. One objection was, there was not enough for money. The reply was: "I write for those who judge of books, not by the quantity, but by the quality of them. I spare both my reader's time and my own, by couching my sense in as few words as I can. Those who prefer the dealers in many words may find them on every side." A second objection was, that there was not variety enough. Wesley answered: "Here is all the variety I promised. I promised the bulk of the magazine should treat of universal redemption. Do you blame me for not rambling from my subject? It is not my manner, I do not aim at it." A third objection was, "there is not variety in the historical part." "What do you mean?" says Wesley. "Would you have me insert bits and scraps of history; or give, in each number, part of the life

1778 Age 75 of one man, and part of that of another? I never proposed this: I think it far better to select a few of the best lives I know, and to go entirely through one before I enter upon another." Another objection was: "you have no pictures or other decorations or embellishments which other magazines have." Wesley answers: "It is true. But I will tell you what I have: such paper as no magazine in England was ever printed upon before. Consider! this one single article costs more than all their fine embellishments put together."

In concluding this notice of the first volume of the *Arminian Magazine*, the following letter will be welcome. It was addressed to Thomas Taylor, and is here copied from the original.

"LONDON, *January* 15, 1778.

"DEAR TOMMY,—As to preaching, you ought not to preach against that unscriptural, blasphemous, mischievous doctrine constantly; no, nor very frequently. But you ought, now and then, to bear a full, strong, express testimony against it; otherwise you are a sinner against God, and the people, and your own soul. I have done this too seldom: scarce once in fifty sermons. I ought to do it once in fifteen or so.

"As to writing or publishing, the deadly poison has, for many years, been spread through England, chiefly by means of those pestilent declamations, *The Gospel*, and *The Spiritual* Magazine. Whatever is designed for an antidote to this poison must be spread in the same manner. Thousands have been thereby poisoned already, and are now twice dead. To guard those who are not poisoned yet, (not to get money,) I fight them at their own weapons. I oppose magazine to magazine, though of a totally different kind. But, it seems, you know nothing at all of the matter. You do not appear to have read the Proposals.[1] This magazine not only contains no railing, but (properly speaking) no controversy. It proves one point: 'God willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.' It goes straight forward, taking notice of no opponents, but invariably pursuing the one point. And this is the only way to preserve the Methodists, and to make the Calvinists quiet. Meantime, both the letters and the lives, which will make a considerable part of every number, contain the marrow of experimental and practical religion; so that nothing of the kind has appeared before. Therefore, a magazine of this kind is a

[1] Taylor was opposed to the magazine. In his unpublished diary, he writes: "1777. December 14—I wrote a long letter to Mr. Wesley concerning the *Arminian Magazine*, which I am persuaded will do hurt, and no good."

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new thing in the land; and those, who formerly spoke against the magazine, may, with a good grace, recommend this as being quite another thing, and published on other motives. I do not desire any Calvinist to read it. I publish it not to convince, but to preserve. I know, by long experience, they will never bend, but when the war is carried into their own quarters. This I will do, as long as God spares my life; and, in love, and in meekness of wisdom. This is the way, and the only way, to establish lasting peace.

"But is it not odd that a Methodist, a preacher, an assistant, should be the only one who sees my brother, and me, and the bulk of the preachers, and the body of the people, to be wrong? Tommy, distrust yourself. Do not lean too much to your own understanding. It is possible they may be right, and you wrong. You do not at all understand this affair. We are well rid of those turbulent men. With love to Nancy,

"Your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

We only add, that, nearly to the end of Wesley's life, Thomas Olivers was a sort of sub-editor, and corrector of the press; but corrected so incorrectly, that, in August, 1789, Wesley writes: "I chose a new person to prepare the *Arminian Magazine;* being obliged, however unwillingly, to drop Mr. Olivers, for only these two reasons: 1. The errata are unsufferable; I have borne them for these twelve years, but can bear them no longer. 2. Several pieces are inserted without my knowledge, both in prose and verse. I must try whether these things cannot be amended for the short residue of my life."

1779.

1779 Age 76 THE year 1779 was one of national alarm. The remarkable trials of Admiral Keppel and Sir Hugh Palliser occasioned fierce debates in parliament. Lord North and his colleagues were accused of being intermeddling, shortsighted, and incapable. American agents were busy with Irish malcontents; and armed associations, not the most loyal, were formed in Dublin and throughout the country. The Spanish ambassador quitted London, after delivering to the secretary of state a hostile manifesto. The ministry proposed, that the militia should be doubled. Press warrants were issued in all directions, and press gangs actively employed in increasing the navy. France was jubilant. England rang with reports of invasion, and of new Spanish armadas, more terrible than that sent against Queen Elizabeth. Gibraltar was threatened; and so was Jersey. Paul Jones, at the head of a squadron manned by French and Americans, and desperadoes from various other countries, menaced the whole of the eastern coast of England, from Flamborough Head to the Frith of the Tay. Lord North's parliamentary majorities were dwindling. George III. had no decisive victories to report. It was asserted that the American war had already added sixty-three millions to the national debt; and Charles Fox declared that treachery, and not ignorance, must have prevailed in the national councils to reduce the country to its present miserable condition. England throughout was in a panic.

In this emergency, as in all others, Wesley was among the foremost to evince his loyalty. On February 8, he wrote: "Finding many serious persons were much discouraged by prophets of evil, confidently foretelling very heavy calamities which were coming upon our nation, I endeavoured to lift up their hands, by opening and applying Psalm xliii. 5, 6." Two days later was the national fast, when he preached on Abraham interceding for the city of Sodom. To quiet the

panic at Newcastle, he took for his text, "The Lord sitteth above the waterfloods; the Lord reigneth a king for ever." In a letter to Bradburn, he says: 1779 Age 76

"It is the judgment of many, that, since the time of the Invincible Armada, Great Britain and Ireland were never in such danger from foreign enemies as they are at this day. Humanly speaking, we are not able to contend with them, either by sea or land. They are watching over us as a leopard over his prey, just ready to spring upon us. They are mighty and rage horribly; but the Lord that dwelleth on high is mightier; and now is the time, at this awful crisis, for the inhabitants of the land to learn righteousness. I make no doubt, but you improve the important opportunity, and lift up your voice like a trumpet. Who knoweth but God may be entreated of *us*, as He was for Nineveh? Our brethren, in various parts of England, have set apart an hour in a week for prayer (namely, from eight till nine on Sunday evening), in behalf of our king and country. Should not the same be done in Ireland too? particularly at Cork and Bandon? Those who have not opportunity of meeting, at the time, may pray part of the hour in private. Meantime, there is a text for *you:* 'I will not destroy it for *ten's* sake.'"[1]

Besides this weekly prayer-meeting by the English Methodists, a Methodist fast was observed in connection with the annual conference. Thomas Taylor writes: "July 30—This day was observed as a fast on account of public affairs. We met in the morning at five; and, after the sermon, we continued in prayer till nine o'clock. At one, we met again, and received the sacrament. In the evening, we kept a watchnight, and I gave an exhortation. But the people do not stay at watchnights in London, as they do in the country."[2]

A few days later, we find Wesley holding a noonday prayer-meeting, at Haverfordwest, to intercede for the king and country. At Bristol, he preached on David's prayer, "Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness"; and, in October, wrote again to Samuel Bradburn as follows.

"LONDON, *October* 10, 1779.

"DEAR SAMMY,—The alarm has been general in England as well as Ireland; particularly in the maritime parts. But it has done abundantly more good than harm to the work of God. The children of God have been greatly stirred up, and have been more instant in prayer. And many men of the world have been greatly awakened, and continue so to

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 117. [2] Manuscript diary.

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this day. Most of those who have the fullest intercourse with God believe our enemies will never be permitted to land in England. And, indeed, God has already given abundant proof of His hearing prayer: first, in their not landing at Plymouth, where they stayed gaping and staring for eight-and-forty hours, while they might with all ease have destroyed both the dock and the town; secondly, in the malignant fever which has broken out in their fleet, and already destroyed several thousands of men."[1]

Infidelity will sneer at this; but religion, recognising a ruling Providence, will reverentially bow its head. The crisis was terrible. Sixty-eight French and Spanish ships of the line, and many frigates and smaller vessels, all commanded by D'Orvilliers, appeared off Plymouth. The British fleet did not exceed thirty-eight sail of the line, and was absent at sea, under the command of Admiral Hardy. Where was the difficulty of seizing Plymouth? Wesley writes: "They might have entered it with perfect ease. The wind was fair; there was no fleet to oppose them; there was scarce any garrison, and the few men that were there had no wadding at all, and but two rounds of powder; and only two of the cannon were mounted." And yet the combined fleet, nearly twice the size of Hardy's, contented itself with a pompous parade in front of the unprotected town. No wonder that Wesley, with grateful exultation, preached from texts like the one he took at Newcastle: "The Lord sitteth above the waterfloods; the Lord reigneth a king for ever."

Before we track Wesley's wanderings in 1779, there is another matter which deserves mention. On the 30th of May, 1778, Voltaire died in Paris, in the eighty-fifth year of his age. His death was what the death of an arch infidel might be expected to be. The subjoined anecdote respecting it has long been widely published, but, perhaps, never so nearly traced to its source as now. Wesley had been informed that one of the chaplains of George III. was about to publish Voltaire's pernicious works in a collected form; and, in a fit of godly indignation, he wrote the following unpublished letter.

"*January* 4, 1779.

"SIR,—In September last, a gentleman, near Bristol, showed me a letter, which he had received from the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, at Paris. I

[1] Manuscript letter.

desired him to give a transcript of one part of it, which he immediately did. It was as follows: 1779 Age 76

"'Mr. Voltaire sent for Monsieur Tronclils, first physician to the Duke of Orleans, (one of his converts to infidelity,) and said to him, "Sir, I desire you will save my life. I will give you half my fortune, if you will lengthen out my days only six months. If not, I shall go to the devil, and carry you with me."'

"This is the man to whom a crowned head pays such a violent compliment! Nay, this is the man whose works are now publishing by a divine of our own Church; yea, a chaplain to his majesty. Pity but the king should know it. If the publisher of that poor wretch's works writes a panegyric upon him or them, I shall think it my duty to show the real value of those writings.

"I am, sir, your humble servant,

J. WESLEY."

No man was a more determined opponent of evil than Wesley was; and, at the same time, no man was a more faithful friend. The following is illustrative of this. The Methodists know something, and might be told a great deal more, respecting William Shent, the Methodist barber of the town of Leeds. Poor William was now in not undeserved embarrassment; his friends forsook him; but not so Wesley. Hence the following, hitherto unpublished, letter to the Methodist society in Keighley.

"LONDON, *January* 11, 1779.

"I HAVE a few questions, which I desire may be proposed to the society at Keighley.

"Who was the occasion of the Methodist preachers first setting foot in Leeds? William Shent.

"Who received John Nelson into his house at his first coming thither? William Shent.

"Who was it that invited me, and received me when I came? William Shent.

"Who was it that stood by me while I preached in the street with stones flying on every side? William Shent.

"Who was it that bore the storm of persecution for the whole town, and stemmed it at the peril of his life? William Shent.

"Whose word did God bless for many years in an eminent manner? William Shent's.

"By whom were many children now in paradise begotten in the Lord, and many now alive? William Shent.

"Who is he that is ready now to be broken up, and turned into the street? William Shent.

"And does nobody care for this? William Shent fell into sin, and was publicly expelled the society; but must he be also starved? Must he

1779 Age 76 with his grey hairs and all his children be without a place to lay his head? Can you suffer this? Oh, tell it not in Gath! Where is gratitude? Where is compassion? Where is Christianity? Where is humanity? Where is concern for the cause of God? Who is a wise man among you? Who is concerned for the gospel? Who has put on bowels of mercy? Let him arise and exert himself in this matter. You here all arise as one man, and roll away the reproach. Let us set him on his feet once more. It may save both him and his family. But what we do, let it be done quickly.

"I am, dear brethren, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

It is hardly necessary to track the steps of Wesley throughout the whole of a journey which occupied the next five months. He opened the new chapel at Bath, of which more must be said shortly. On Friday, March 19, he preached in Bengeworth church at noon; and, at six, in the church at Pebworth. At West Bromwich, during a terrific storm of wind and hail, he addressed a congregation in the open air. At Madeley, he preached in the new chapel, built by his friend Fletcher, in Madeley Wood. He opened a new chapel at Davyhulme, Manchester. He also paid his first visit to Oldham, where he says: "I had such a congregation as I have not seen since I was in the Cornish amphitheatre. And all, beside a few giddy children, were seriously attentive."

This was a great improvement in the manners of the Oldham people. When Matthew Mayer commenced preaching here in 1763, he asked a man to allow him to stand before his door. "No," replied the Lancashire savage; and then he swore that, if Mayer attempted to gather a congregation there, he would cleave his skull. Having removed to the door of Jonathan Mabbot's, in George Street, Mayer mounted a stool; but he had no sooner sung and prayed, than the mob, led on by churchwardens and constables, surrounded him. "By what authority do you come hither?" asked the Oldham functionaries. "By what authority do you ask me?" replied Mr. Mayer. "Pull him down, pull him down!" cried the mob; and then one of the constables upset the preacher's stool; and the zealous guardians of the Church shouted, "We want none of your preaching here." On the Sunday following, while Mayer was preaching, the mob amused themselves by thrusting pins into the legs and arms of serious hearers; and, on the

Sunday after that, a brute was hired for threepence halfpenny to strip himself stark naked, and rush into the midst of Mayer's congregation. On another occasion, John Murlin was dragged from his horseblock pulpit, and was thrown into a dungeon; and, on another, James Hall was honoured with the presence not only of the constables, churchwardens, and Oldham mob, but also of a huntsman and his hounds. The churchwardens raved; the constables brandished their official staves; the mob bawled; the dogs barked; and the huntsman blew his horn with such vehemence that Mr. Hall found it impossible to preach, but, for an hour and a half, continued to sing and pray.[1] 1771 Age 68

Leaving Oldham, Wesley proceeded to Northwich and other places in Cheshire; then to Warrington, Liverpool, Bolton, Rochdale, Bacup, and Padiham. He writes: "April 13—At one o'clock, I preached in the shell of the house at Padiham, where there is at length a prospect of peace, after abundance of disturbance, caused by one who neither fears God nor reverences man."

The chapel referred to, in this extract, was erected in the midst of the most determined opposition. What was built during the day was frequently demolished during the night; and it became necessary to appoint nocturnal watchers to guard the premises. At length, the building was completed, and had, in the front wall, a stone with a sun dial, serving for a clock, and round about it an inscription, which, to future generations, was a memento of bygone troubles: "They thrust sore at me that I might fall; but the Lord hath helped me, and taken part against them that hated me."

From Padiham, Wesley went to Todmorden, Heptonstall, Ewood, and Halifax. He writes: "April 15—I went to Halifax, where a little thing had lately occasioned great disturbance. An angel blowing a trumpet was placed on the sounding board over the pulpit. Many were vehemently against this; others as vehemently for it; but a total end was soon put to the contest, for the angel vanished away."

"Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" Several of the Halifax Methodists, thinking that the sounding

[1] Manuscripts.

1779 Age 76 board would be improved by some sort of ornament, opened a subscription for that purpose, and, a fortnight before Wesley's visit, procured the celestial trumpeter which Wesley mentions. John Murlin, one of the preachers, determined not to preach under the angel's expanded wings. Discussion sprung up, in the midst of which Wesley came. The leaders were summoned; a hot discussion followed; and the votes, for and against the angel, were equal. Just at this juncture, John Hatton, of Lightcliffe, entered, and gave a vote for the angel's removal. Immediately, the carved image was taken down; John Murlin hewed it in pieces; and, before midnight, it was burnt in the chapel yard. Great was the consternation of these simple Methodists, when, at the five o'clock preaching, next morning, they found their pet angel had vanished. Quarrelling ensued; and several influential members, in angelic indignation, left the society which had destroyed the angelic ornament, and, in some instances, remained to the end of life unconnected with any church whatever.[1]

Proceeding to Haworth, Wesley preached, in the morning, in the church; but, in the afternoon, "thousands upon thousands being gathered together," he was obliged to take his stand in the churchyard. The next day,—Monday, April 19,—he preached in the church at Bingley; and then went to Otley. "On April 24," Thomas Taylor writes, "I met Mr. Wesley at Cross Hall, and found the old apostle as hearty and lively as ever. The conversation at table was such as became our religious profession. There were present two pious clergymen, two of my brethren, and several serious women. On Sunday, April 25, I went with Mr. Wesley to Birstal church, after which he preached to, I think, the largest congregation I have ever seen in any place."[2]

At Huddersfield, Wesley found a great revival of the work of God, sometimes "sixteen, eighteen, yea, twenty," being converted in a day. At Leeds, Dr. Kershaw, the vicar, desired him to assist at the sacrament. Ten clergymen were present, and seven or eight hundred communicants. At Darlington, he found some of the liveliest Methodists in

1 "History of Methodism in Halifax."
2 Manuscript diary.

the north of England. He preached in the market place, and all behaved well, except a party of the Queen's Dragoons. At Barnard Castle, the Durham militia were assembled,—the handsomest body of soldiers he had ever seen, except in Ireland; and all, officers and soldiers, came to hear him, and were a pattern to the whole congregation. 1779 Age 76

He now made his way to Newcastle, and thence to Scotland, where he travelled as far north as Inverness. He writes: "June 8—I reached Inverness, but found a new face of things there. Good Mr. Mackenzie had been, for some years, removed to Abraham's bosom. Mr. Fraser, his colleague, a pious man, of the old stamp, was likewise gone to rest. The three present ministers are of another kind; so that I have no more place in the kirk; and the wind and rain would not permit me to preach on the green. However, our house was large, though gloomy enough. Being now informed, (which I did not suspect before,) that the town was uncommonly given to drunkenness, I used the utmost plainness of speech; and I believe not without effect. I then spent some time with the society, increased from twelve to between fifty and sixty;[1] many of these knew in whom they had believed; so that all the pains which have been taken to stop the work of God here have hitherto been in vain."

A month later, Wesley wrote the following hitherto unpublished letter to Mr. McAllum.

"EPWORTH, *July* 10, 1779.

"DEAR DUNCAN,—This is the circumstance which puzzles the case: who can preach in Erse but you? Cannot you then think of any preacher, whom you love, and who is a zealous, active man? Inverness should by all means be a circuit by itself, including as many towns as you please, north and south. I wish you would think of it, and send me the plan to London.

"Did not sister Anderson receive my letter? I wonder she did not answer. Joseph Moore utterly denies he ever offered her marriage. I desired her to tell me the very words he spoke or wrote.

"I am, dear Duncan, yours affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY.

"To Mr. Duncan McAllum,
at Mr. John Watson's, slater, Inverness."

[1] How is it that there are not more Methodists in Inverness now than there were ninety years ago, in the days of good old Duncan McAllum?

1779 Age 76 Wesley spent nearly a month in his evangelistic tour through Scotland. Everywhere he was received with great respect and affection; and he speaks of many "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." He was introduced to several persons of distinction, and, among others, to gossiping James Boswell, who writes: "Though I differed from Mr. John Wesley in some points, I admired his various talents, and loved his pious zeal. At my request, therefore, Dr. Johnson gave me a letter of introduction to him.

"To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley.

"*May* 3, 1779.

"SIR,—Mr. Boswell, a gentleman, who has been long known to me, is desirous of being known to you, and has asked this recommendation, which I give him with great willingness, because I think it very much to be wished that worthy and religious men should be acquainted with each other.

"I am, sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Boswell adds, that he presented the letter to Wesley at Edinburgh, "and was very politely received."[1]

Wesley, in returning, reached Newcastle on June 22, and would fain have rested in a place to which he was tenderly attached. He writes: "Wednesday, June 23—I rested here. Lovely place, and lovely company! But I believe there is another world; therefore I must 'arise and go hence.'" Accordingly, next morning, he set out for Stockton upon Tees, and preached all the way along the east coast of England till he came to Great Grimsby. "Here," he says, "I found a little trial. In this, and many other parts of the kingdom, those striplings, who call themselves Lady Huntingdon's preachers, have greatly hindered the work of God. They have neither sense, courage, nor grace, to go and beat up the devil's quarters, in any place where Christ has not been named; but, wherever we have entered as by storm, and gathered a few souls, often at the peril of our lives, they creep in, and, by doubtful disputations, set every one's sword aginst his brother. One of these has just crept into Grimsby, and is striving to divide the poor little flock; but I hope his labour will be in vain, and they will still hold the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

[1] Boswell's Life of Johnson.

Having visited the societies in Lincolnshire, Wesley proceeded to Doncaster and Sheffield, and thence, by way of Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, Hinckley, and Coventry, to London, which he reached on July 23. 1779 Age 76

Wesley had not preached at Hinckley since the year 1744. What led him to visit the town now? We learn, from the unpublished autobiography of Thomas Dixon, who, at this time, was stationed in the Leicestershire circuit, that, just before the conference of 1779, he attempted to introduce Methodism into Hinckley, and not without success. According to custom, he took his stand in the street, and began to sing. The night was wet, and his congregation was not only small, but seemed so apprehensive of the Methodist apparition, that, while they listened to him, they also kept at a safe distance from him. He preached again next morning to a congregation somewhat larger, and then set out for Tamworth. This was his first and his last visit; but a class was formed just after,[1] which, in 1780, contributed nearly a pound per quarter for the support of the work of God;[2] and, from that time to this, Methodism has had a place in Hinckley.

Then as it respects Coventry, this was the first sermon Wesley delivered here. He says: "July 21—When I came to Coventry, I found notice had been given for my preaching in the park; but the heavy rain prevented. I sent to the mayor, desiring the use of the town hall. He refused; but, the same day, gave the use of it to a dancing master. I then went to the women's market. Many soon gathered together, and listened with all seriousness. I preached there again the next morning, and again in the evening."

As already stated, from Coventry Wesley went to London. The entry in his journal recording the journey is worthy of quotation. "I took coach for London. I was nobly attended: behind the coach were ten convicted felons, loudly blaspheming, and rattling their chains; by my side sat a man with a loaded blunderbuss, and another upon the coach."

Before proceeding to notice the conference of 1779, two other matters demand attention.

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[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1823, p. 777.
[2] Ibid, 1856, p. 234.

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Thomas Maxfield seceded from Wesley in 1763; took away with him about two hundred members of Wesley's society; and became the minister of a separate and independent congregation.[1] For some reason, he now wished to return to Wesley's connexion; but to this Wesley and his brother objected. Hence the following letters, by Charles Wesley, the first addressed to Vincent Perronet, the second to Wesley himself.

"LONDON, *April* 20, 1779.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—My brother and I agreed not to receive Mr. Maxfield again, as a fellow labourer, till he acknowledged his fault. Ought we not to wait for some word, of his being sensible of his ingratitude? Ought we to trust him, and the people to his care, without it? I have not the least spark of resentment towards Mr. Maxfield; but to deliver up our charge to him, unconvinced, is to betray them.

"My brother's interest with the bishop is great, (I believe,) but my son Samuel's is greater. Sam and the bishop are, *Ego et rex meus.*

"Your very affectionate and ever obliged servant,

"CHARLES WESLEY."[2]

"LONDON, *April* 23, 1779.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I still love Thomas Maxfield. I see some advantages to us, as well as to him, from his return to us, *provided* he is first convinced. Receive him *unconvinced*, and you will have to put him away again, when perhaps it will scarce be in your power. One more trial, if you please, we will make upon him, in a conference between us three. Possibly we may gain our brother.

"I shall be happy to hear you have saved poor William Shent. Hopper and others will, I know, draw in their horns while you are talking with them, and be perhaps convinced for a short time. Give them back their first love, and their first poverty, and they will not even wish to reign without us. Peter Jaco, John Atlay, and John Pawson, might, I hope, be set right by a friendly conference with us. They then would strengthen their brethren, or recover them.

"Your defect of mistrust needs my excess to guard it. You cannot be taken by storm, but may by surprise. We seem designed for each other. If we could and would be more together, it might be better for both. That I shall go first, I cannot doubt. The extraordinary strength, continued to you, is a promise of your longer continuance. My strength and my work are very near their end.

"CHARLES WESLEY."[3]

The above letter refers to another matter besides that of the return of Thomas Maxfield. Charles Wesley was still

[1] Atmore's "Methodist Memorial."

[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1826, p. 244. [3] Ibid. 1789, p. 388.

jealous of the preachers aspiring after power, and especially of Christopher Hopper and his friends. He seems to have thought, that John Atlay, who was now the book steward in London, and John Pawson, who was the London assistant, and Peter Jaco, who was a London supernumerary, "might be set right by a friendly conference"; but of the other London preachers, including Thomas Rankin and Thomas Coke, he was in doubt. He properly enough gives himself credit for an excess of caution; but, perhaps wrongly, thinks his brother had not enough of it. 1779 Age 71

This was another important crisis in the history of the two Wesleys. It was only a few months before, that City Road chapel had been opened. Charles Wesley, Thomas Coke, John Richardson, and John Abraham, were its officiating clergymen; but John Pawson, Thomas Rankin, Thomas Tennant, and Peter Jaco, were itinerant preachers, appointed by the conference of 1778, to the London circuit, of which the chapel in City Road was now a part. What was the result? Jealousies sprung up, indirectly referred to in the above letter, but mentioned in greater detail in another letter to be presently inserted. Before, however, that letter is introduced, perhaps the following extracts from John Pawson's unpublished manuscript memoir of Dr. Whitehead will be acceptable, and will cast light on Wesley's difficulties. Mr. Pawson writes:

"I was perhaps as well acquainted with the two brothers as any man now living. That Mr. Charles Wesley was of a very suspicious temper is certainly true; and that Mr. John Wesley had far more charity, in judging of persons in general, (except the rich and great,) than his brother had, is equally true. But that he was so apt to be taken in with appearances is not true. He was well able to form a judgment of particular persons, and was as seldom mistaken as his brother. I once heard him pleasantly say: 'My brother suspects everybody, and he is continually imposed upon; but I suspect nobody, and I am never imposed upon.' It is well known that Mr. Charles Wesley was much prejudiced in favour of the clergy, through the whole course of his life, and that it was nothing but hard necessity that obliged him, in any degree, to continue the lay preachers. He must have been blind indeed not to have seen, that God had given to many of them, at least, very considerable ministerial gifts, and that He attended their labours with great success; but I am well persuaded, that, could he have found a sufficient number of clergymen to have carried on the work of God, he would soon have disowned all the

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lay preachers. He was glad of their assistance when he did not choose to preach himself; and, accordingly, on a Sunday evening, he would always have a lay preacher appointed as well as himself, lest a shower of rain, or an agreeable visit, should prevent his attending. At a conference held in Bristol many years ago, about a dozen clergymen attended for the purpose of convincing us, that we ought not to preach in any parish that was favoured with a gospel minister. Mr. Charles Wesley took part with them, and said, 'If I was stationed in any particular parish, you should not preach there.' Mr. John Hampson replied, 'I would preach there, and never ask your leave; and I should think I had as good a right for doing so, as you had.' Mr. Charles answered in great anger, 'You are a grievous wolf: you will tear the flock when my brother and myself are dead, unless God give you repentance.' Mr. Charles was inclined to find out and magnify any supposed fault in the lay preachers; but his brother treated them with respect, and exercised a fatherly care over them. I am persuaded that, from the creation of the world, there never existed a body of men who looked up to any single person with a more profound degree of reverence than the preachers did to Mr. Wesley; and I am bold to say, that never did any man, no, not St. Paul himself, possess so high a degree of power over so large a body of men as was possessed by him. He used his power, however, for the edification of the people, and abused it as little perhaps as any one man ever did. When any difficulty occurred in governing the preachers, it soon vanished. The oldest, the very best, and those of them that had the greatest influence, were ever ready to unite with him, and to assist him to the utmost of their power. The truth is, if the preachers were in any danger at all, it was of calling Mr. Wesley 'Rabbi,' and implicitly obeying him in whatsoever he thought proper to command.

"Dr. Whitehead informs his readers, that a party existed among the preachers, who wished for a total separation from the Established Church, and for the Methodists to be formed into an independent body; and represents Dr. Coke as being at the head of that party. I am well assured, that this is incorrect. The preachers only wished, that the people, who had grown weary of seeking the living among the dead, and of asking bread of those who they well knew had only a stone to give them, might be indulged with the lively ordinances of God; and some of the people thought it very unjust, not to say cruel, that their ministers did not grant them the privilege of worshipping God at those particular times of the Lord's day, when both body and mind were best prepared for so doing. It is true, that a party existed, both among the preachers and people, who were inclined to believe, that those whom God had called to preach might lawfully administer the sacraments; as they were not able to perceive that it required a greater degree of wisdom and piety to qualify a person to baptize a child than to preach the word of God. They likewise had scruples whether it was right to wish those ministers God speed, by attending their ministry, whom, they felt convinced, God had never sent. But, at the same time, the preachers knew, that there never was among themselves a sufficient number of acceptable men to supply all the

Methodist congregations; and that, if there had been, and if an entire separation from the Church had taken place, the Methodists were too poor to support such a multitude of ministers. Common prudence, therefore, prevented them from wishing for that which they knew could not be accomplished."

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These are important statements, coming from a man of Mr. Pawson's ministerial standing, and who was one of Wesley's itinerant preachers during the last twenty-nine years of Wesley's life. They could be easily extended; but, perhaps, enough has been said, to show that the feeling, between Charles Wesley and the preachers, was not of the most friendly kind; and this will prepare the reader for the following letter, which Charles, at this period, addressed to his brother.

"LONDON, *June* 16, 1779.

"DEAR BROTHER,—Mr. B. has been lately with the committee, and was there informed, that our preachers (the three principal[1]) have written to the country preachers heavy complaints of their ill usage by the clergy here; not, I should suppose, by quiet John Richardson,—not by passive Dr. Coke, for he, they say, is gone to Bristol, that he may not be a witness of their cruel persecution. The persecuting clergy, therefore, are neither more nor less than your own brother Charles, and the whole ground of their complaint against me is, 'my serving the chapel on Sunday afternoon, as well as in the morning.'

"But this is no new grievance; for I constantly preached Sunday morning and afternoon at Bristol. If they could exclude me here, they would not long permit me there.

"My reasons for preaching at the new chapel twice every Sunday are: 1. Because, after you, I have the best right. 2. Because I have so short a time to preach anywhere. 3. Because I am fully persuaded I can do more good there than in any other place. They, I know, are of a different judgment, and make no secret of it, declaring everywhere, 'that the work is stopping; the society scattering; and the congregation at the new chapel dwindled away and quite dead.'

"I thank God, the chapel is well filled. Last Sunday I preached twice, never with greater, and seldom with equal, effect. After sermon, Mr. Rankin followed me to the vestry to assure me, 'he had never spoken disrespectfully of us, and that he was a great friend to the Church.' At the same time, a gentlewoman came, filled with faith and love by the word just spoken. I turned aside to let Mr. Rankin examine her. She said that, a month ago, she was brought up out of the pit of despair, under my

[1] These were Pawson, Rankin, and Jaco. The committee consisted of gentlemen appointed to manage the business of City Road chapel.—(Pawson's manuscript.)

1779 Age 76 word. He repeated his inquiries, and she her answers, to his satisfaction shall I say, or dissatisfaction? I would hope the former. You will inquire when here (only not of the preachers), and judge for yourself whether my persevering ministry at the chapel has done good or hurt.

"I think the preachers wrong, and in the greatest danger through pride; but I have, and will have, no quarrel with them. Mr. Kemp proposed to carry me to meet you on the last day's journey, or I should not have thought of it. I do not want to have the first word. Let them have the first and last. I do not want to interfere in that government of yours, or to appear at all at the congress. A word of yours might turn the scale, and send me directly to Bristol.

"It is just come into my mind, 'The lay preachers affect to believe I act as a clergyman in opposition to them.' To me, it seems that I act as I do, in goodwill to them, as well as to the people. If there was no man above them, what would become of them? How would they tear one another in pieces! Convince them, if you can, that they want a clergyman over them, to keep them and the flock together. Convince them, that it is impossible I should stand in their way long, for I cannot (should I live to the winter) serve the new chapel Sundays and holydays in all weathers. Persuade each of them to be the least, not the greatest; and then all will be right again. You have no alternative but to conquer that spirit, or to be conquered by it. Can you think, I envy you your pre-eminence? If God continues my strength, I shall take the best care of the chapel till you return. Then I shall deliver up my charge to you, and you alone.

"CHARLES WESLEY."[1]

This peevish epistle, published in Wesley's own *Arminian Magazine*, will not add to the fair fame of Methodism's great hymnist. It was an unworthy production of a pen which wrote hundreds, in fact, thousands, of sweet songs of praise. John Pawson—good, but gossiping,—and Thomas Rankin—honest to the heart's inmost core, but somewhat obstinate and overbearing,—were far from perfect; but was it just in Charles Wesley to write to his brother respecting them in the querulous tone in which he did? Charles Wesley says, the City Road chapel was well filled; Pawson says, in the manuscript memoir of Dr. Whitehead, that "the congregation fell off exceedingly; and that the society was brought into great disorder." Charles Wesley was a scholar, and, as a sacred poet, was without a peer; but we incline to think, that John Pawson and Thomas Rankin were more popular and powerful preachers than either he or any other of his City Road clerical colleagues; and it is not surprising, that the

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1789, p. 441.

people wished to hear them on Sundays as well as week days; and that the itinerants themselves,—one of whom was the appointed superintendent of the London circuit, and the other of whom had been Wesley's chosen superintendent of the whole of the Methodist societies in America,—should think they had quite as much right as Charles Wesley, Thomas Coke, John Richardson, or John Abraham, to preach to Sunday congregations in City Road. The truth is, though, in years past, Charles Wesley's ministry had been exceedingly attractive and powerful, it was now, what shall we say? John Pawson writes: "When he was favoured with freedom of mind, which was but seldom, then his preaching was truly profitable; but, in general, it was exceedingly dry and lifeless." His sons Charles and Samuel,—the former twenty-one years of age, and the latter thirteen,—were, by their musical genius, creating a sensation in the highest circles of London society; and, for several years, conducted in their father's house a series of domestic subscription concerts, of twelve nights' continuance, in each season. Their father thoroughly approved of this. "I am clear," says he, "without a doubt, that my sons' concert is after the will and order of Providence." Wesley appends to this a note: "I am clear of another mind."[1] Without staying to settle the dispute, there can be no doubt that, by these concerts, Charles Wesley was brought into the society of a large number of the rich and great. The simple minded London Methodists were staggered at one of their great leaders having such musical performances in his house, and at his mingling with persons, who, though highly genteel, were not religious. Many began to regard him with suspicion; his preaching popularity was waning; Pawson says, "he was like Samson shorn of his strength"; his health also was failing; like most men of high poetic genius, he was subject to melancholy moods: put all these things together, and the petulancy and suspicion of Charles Wesley's letter to his brother will not excite surprise.

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This then was the state of things awaiting the venerable Wesley, on his return to London, after a laborious preaching

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1789, p. 387.

1776 Age 76 tour of five months' duration. By an almost superhuman effort, he had built and opened his new chapel in City Road; but things, instead of being more prosperous than ever, were in a state of disastrous commotion. In this, the first year after the chapel was opened, there was a decrease of one hundred and twenty-three members in the London circuit, though that circuit had now an unprecedented staff of ordained clergymen, and four of the best itinerants in Wesley's connexion. Ordinary men would have been discouraged and at their wits' end; but not so the man who was born, not to be conquered by difficulties, but to conquer them.

Wesley's conference of 1779 was commenced on August 3; and it was now ascertained, that nineteen other circuits besides London had a decrease of members. Wesley asked, How can we account for this? The reasons assigned were:— 1. Partly the neglect of outdoor preaching, and of trying new places. 2. Partly prejudice against the king, and speaking evil of dignities. 3. But chiefly the increase of worldly mindedness, and conformity to the world. It was also resolved, that no one speaking evil of those in authority, or prophesying evil to the nation, should be a Methodist preacher. Itinerants were reproved for hastening home to their wives after preaching; and were told, they ought never to do this till they had met the society. To revive the work in Scotland, the preachers were directed to preach in the open air as much as possible; to try every town and village; and to visit every member of society at home.

As soon as the conference was ended, Wesley set out, with his brother and his family, for Wales, where he spent a fortnight in preaching to large and deeply affected congregations.

He then proceeded to the west of England. At Exeter, he writes: "I preached in a convenient room; lately a school; I suppose formerly a chapel. It is both neat and solemn, and is believed to contain four or five hundred people."

This was the meeting-house concerning which Wesley wrote to Samuel Wells, the assistant of the Tiverton circuit, as follows.

"LONDON, *January* 28, 1779.

"DEAR SAMMY,—According to the act of toleration—1. You are *required* to *certify* to the registrar of the bishop's court, or the justices,

the place of your meeting for Divine worship. This is all you have to do. You ask nothing at all of the bishop or justices. 1779 Age 76

"2. The registrar, or clerk of the court, is *required* to register the same, and to give a certificate thereof to such persons as shall *demand* the same; for which there shall be no greater fee or reward taken than sixpence.

"I advise you to go once more to the sessions, and say, 'Gentlemen, we have had advice from London; we desire nothing at all of *you*; but we *demand* of your clerk to register this place, and to give us a certificate thereof; or to answer the refusal at his peril.'

"Answer no questions to the justices, or lawyers, but with a bow, and with repeating the words, 'Our business is only with your clerk; we *demand* of him what the act requires him to do.'

"If you judge proper, you may show this to any of the justices. What I have written, I am ready to defend.

"You have led the justices into the mistake, by your *manner* of addressing them. Beware of this for the time to come. You have nothing to ask of *them*.

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

On September 4, Wesley returned to Bristol, where he spent a month in visiting the surrounding societies. He then made his way to London, preaching at Devizes, Winchester, and Portsmouth. On leaving London, he slept, for the last time, in the old Foundery. He now, for the first time slept in the house, in which he afterwards died, in City Road.

On October 11, he began his preaching tour to Northamptonshire; a week later to Sussex; and a week later still to Norfolk. He then commenced his annual examination of the London society, and writes: "I did not find such an increase as I expected. Nay, there was a considerable decrease, plainly owing to a senseless jealousy that had crept in between our preachers."

This doubtless refers to the quarrel already mentioned. Unfortunately, the strife was now extended to Bath. The assistant appointed at the late conference to the Bristol circuit (of which Bath was part), was Alexander M'Nab, a native of Perthshire, in North Britain, and now in the thirty-fourth year of his age. For thirteen years, he had been an itinerant preacher, and had laboured, with considerable

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1825, p. 456.

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success, in the three kingdoms.[1] Wesley, writing to Lady Maxwell in 1771, said: "Mr. M'Nab is a sound and good preacher; but too warm, and impatient of contradiction."[2] Thomas Rutherford, one of his colleagues, writes: "I was particularly attached to him. He was a most amiable, sensible man, and an excellent preacher. He had the most copious flow of natural, simple oratory, of any man I ever heard. There was an ease, beauty, sweetness, and harmony in his style and language, that was at once both striking and pleasing. The Rev. Dr. Webster once said, 'I have heard Mr. Walker, Mr. Fordyce, Dr. Blair, etc.; but Mr. M'Nab is a greater orator than any of them.'"[3] At the conference of 1777, M'Nab was appointed to Edinburgh; but found the chapel in such a ruinous condition, that he spent £500 in repairing it. For this amount he was personally responsible; and, in order to extricate himself, was requested, by the following conference, to visit the English societies for the purpose of asking assistance.[4] While on this begging excursion, he wrote a letter to Robert Dall, which is inserted here to show the spirit of the man, and that he wished for peace, notwithstanding that he was soon involved in war.

"BRADFORD, *April* 24, 1779.

"MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,—I hope persons and things are better at Glasgow then when you went there. I was grieved to hear of the disunion of the preachers, and that it had hurt the people; but trust God sent you to Glasgow as a cure for their wounds. In every place, I find the prosperity of the work, under God, depends, in a great measure, upon the piety, zeal, and prudence of the preachers. Persons of that character God will honour, to build up His church; and I need not tell you, we have need of faith in doing and suffering the Divine will; for, without that, we have not the necessary qualification to render us either holy, happy, or useful. In my present employ, I find both pleasure and pain; but, hitherto, God has been with me, and I believe will never leave me. Wishing you every blessing, I am your truly affectionate brother,

"ALEX. M'NAB."[5]

Such was one of the chief actors in the scene at Bath. Another was the Rev. Edward Smyth, who has been already mentioned, and who had brought his wife to Bath for the

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1779, p. 240.
[2] Lady Maxwell's Life, p. 70.
[3] Rutherford's Life, p. 94.
[4] Atmore's "Methodist Memorial."
[5] Manuscript letter.

benefit of her health. Wesley writes: "God having greatly blessed the labours of Mr. Smyth in the north of Ireland, I desired him to preach every Sunday evening in our chapel, while he remained in Bath. But, as soon as I was gone, Mr. M'Nab vehemently opposed this; affirming it was the common cause of all the lay preachers; that they were appointed by the conference, not by me; and would not suffer the clergy to ride over their heads, Mr. Smyth in particular, of whom he said all manner of evil. Others warmly defended him. Hence the society was torn in pieces, and thrown into the utmost confusion." 1779 Age 76

Such was the dispute. What was the result? On November 22, Wesley and his brother set out from London to settle the disturbance. The Bath society was assembled. Wesley says: "I read to them a paper, which I wrote, near twenty years ago, on a like occasion. Herein I observed, that 'the rules of our preachers were fixed by me, before any conference existed,' particularly the twelfth: 'Above all, you are to preach when and where I appoint.' By obstinately opposing which rule, Mr. M'Nab has made all this uproar. In the morning, at a meeting of the preachers, I informed Mr. M'Nab, that, as he did not agree to our fundamental rule, I could not receive him as one of our preachers, till he was of another mind. Wednesday, November 24, I read the same paper to the society at Bristol, as I found the flame had spread thither also. A few at Bath separated from us on this account; but the rest were thoroughly satisfied."

Such is the entry in Wesley's journal; but eight months after this, he writes: "Mr. M'Nab quarrelling with Mr. Smyth threw wildfire among the people at Bath, and occasioned anger, jealousies, judging each other, backbiting, and tale bearing without end; and, in spite of all the pains which have been taken, the wound is not healed to this day."

Wesley throws all the blame upon M'Nab; but it may fairly be doubted whether this was just. There can be no question concerning Wesley's abstract right to appoint to his chapels whom he pleased; but the manner in which the right was exercised is not an improper subject for doubt and discussion. Wesley pleads what he did twenty years before; but, even allowing that his action then was right, it remains to be

1779 proved, that the same action, under altered circumstances, was
Age 76 prudent now. During that interval, the number of Methodists and Methodist preachers had more than doubled. Besides, now that the number of itinerant preachers was more than a hundred and sixty; and that many of them were men of great genius and talent, as well as piety; and that all had a right to take part in the deliberations of the annual conference, which really made the appointments for the ensuing year, Wesley's claim to have the sole and exclusive power, asserted in the document read to the Bath society, is a claim which can hardly be admitted.[1] There is a forgetfulness of existing facts, and therefore a fallaciousness, in the following letter, written on this subject a few weeks after the Bath disturbances occurred.

"*January*, 1780.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—You seem not to have well considered the Rules of a Helper, or the rise of Methodism. It pleased God, by me, to awaken, first my brother, and then a few others; who severally desired of me, as a favour, that I would direct them in all things. After my return from Georgia, many were both awakened and converted to God. One, and another, and another of these desired to join with me as sons in the gospel, to be directed by me. I drew up a few plain rules (observe there was no conference in being!), and permitted them to join me on these conditions. Whoever, therefore, violates these conditions, particularly that of being directed by me in the work, does, *ipso facto*, disjoin himself from me. This brother M'Nab has done (but he cannot see that he has done amiss): and he would have it a common cause; that is, he would have all the preachers do the same. He thinks 'they have a right so to do.' So they have. They have a right to disjoin themselves from me whenever they please. But they cannot, in the nature of the thing, join with me any longer than they are directed by me. And what, if fifty of the preachers disjoined themselves! What should I lose thereby? Only a great deal of labour and care, which I do not seek; but endure, because no one else either can or will.

"You seem likewise to have quite a wrong idea of a conference. For above six years after my return to England, there was no such thing. I then desired some of my preachers to meet me, in order to advise, not control, me. And you may observe, they had no power at all, but what

[1] Thomas Taylor, in his manuscript diary, remarks: "1780, January 14—I learned, that Mr. M'Nab is excluded the connexion; but I cannot learn, that he has merited such treatment. A man who has been a credit to our cause, whose moral character is unblamable, and whose abilities are considerable, is expelled for his integrity and uprightness. Being very uneasy on account of the expulsion, I wrote Mr. Wesley respecting it."

I exercised through them. I chose to exercise the power which God had given me in this manner, both to avoid ostentation, and gently to habituate the people to obey them when I should be taken from their head. But as long as I remain with them, the fundamental rule of Methodism remains inviolate. As long as any preacher joins with me, he is to be directed by me in his work. Do not you see then, that brother M'Nab, whatever his intentions might be, acted as wrong as wrong could be? and that the representing of this as the common cause of the preachers was the way to common destruction, the way to turn their heads, and to set them in arms? It was a blow at the very root of Methodism. I could not, therefore, do less than I did; it was the very least that could be done, for fear that evil should spread. 1779 Age 76

"I do not willingly speak of these things at all; but I do it now out of necessity; because I perceive the mind of you, and some others, is a little hurt by not seeing them in a true light.

"I am, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

This was Wesley's defence of the boldest act of discipline he had ever exercised; but we still doubt its wisdom and sufficiency. All he says about the preachers placing themselves under his direction, and about the first conferences, is strictly true; but Methodist matters now were widely different from what they were when Methodist conferences were first begun. With all due deference to Wesley, Methodism now was not wholly the work of Wesley, nor was it entirely dependent on him. At this very time, there was, among the preachers, a ministerial phalanx, who had a right to be something more than mere *advisers*,—servants in the gospel, sometimes taken into the counsels of their chief, but wholly at his disposal. There were Olivers, Pawson, Rankin, Murlin, Story, Whatcoat, Valton, Benson, Hanby, Manners, Taylor, Mather, Hopper, Vasey, Thompson, Pilmoor, Rhodes, Bradburn, Boardman, the two Hampsons, Barber, Rutherford, Moore, Myles, and others, whose names will always be memorable in Methodistic history. Considering the talents, the preaching power, the untiring labours, and the marvellous success of these distinguished men, was it wise, and was it fair, for Wesley to insist upon his retention of the absolute authority that he justly exercised when Methodism was first commenced? Remembering the paltry pittance they received

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 132.

1779 Age 76 for their important and unceasing toil, was it just, that, in a great religious movement, now spread throughout the three kingdoms, and to which they themselves had greatly contributed, they should be employed as mere *workmen*, without the least right to take a part in the arrangement of their respective spheres of labour, and without a particle of authority, except what was implied in their advices, in the general legislation of a body now numbering more than forty thousand people? Was it surprising, that Wesley's expulsion of M'Nab, for claiming a pulpit to which he had been appointed at the conference, but into which Wesley desired to introduce an expelled Irish clergyman, should create dissatisfaction and incipient rebellion?

There can be no doubt, that this was one of the most dangerous ordeals through which Methodism passed in the lifetime of its founder. It was hardly a fair statement of the case, when Wesley said, that all that he would lose, by fifty of his preachers leaving him, would be "a great deal of labour and care." If such an event had happened, Methodism would have been split into fragments, and, as a system, would have ceased to exist; and Wesley, seeing the demolition of such a work, would have been a sorrowful man for the remainder of his life. The crisis, in 1779, was most momentous. It was really the first time that Wesley's supreme and absolute power was professedly and openly resisted. The whole question hinges on the point, were the appointments to chapels and to circuits made by Wesley and his conference of preachers *conjointly?* or were they made by Wesley himself *alone?* Wesley argues, that the power of appointment rested solely with himself. We can only answer, that this was an unreasonable and dangerous power to wield. Under the circumstances, Wesley could not claim it, without ignoring the reasonable claims of a large body of the most remarkable men that England has ever had; and he could not exercise it without serious danger to himself and to his system.

Alexander M'Nab, though comparatively young, was not an ordinary man. Testimonies concerning his character, eloquence, and preaching power, have been already given. Mr. Smyth was doubtless both sensible and pious; but we greatly question whether he was as popular and powerful a

preacher as the North Briton. No charge of unsound doctrine, or of immorality, or of incompetency, or of inattention to discipline, was made against M'Nab. He was faithfully and successfully doing the work to which he had been appointed. He was popular with the people. But because he refused, at Wesley's bidding, to allow an Irish stranger, not at all his superior, but, probably, his inferior in pulpit ability, to take his place, Wesley, at once, by his own *ipse dixit*, expelled him from his connexion of preachers. However painful to do it, we are bound to maintain that this was an injustice. The act might be technically right; but it was an almost popish assumption of autocratic authority, and a most perilous—it might have been disastrous—exercise of disciplinary power. It is true that no absolute rebellion followed,—a fact showing the simple minded piety of the Methodist preachers and people, and the marvellous influence of Wesley over them, and their almost unparalleled respect for his character and labours; but there were great commotions and serious misgivings; and, if concessions had not been made, there might have been open resistance, and a consequent wreck of Methodist success and hope. 1779 Age 76

Here, however, another question occurs. Was Wesley to be solely or principally blamed for this imprudent exercise of power? We have no wish to shield him from censure, when censure is merited; but if others were to blame as well as he, or if others were even more blamable than he, it is only fair to his memory and name, that the facts should be published.

Charles Wesley's quarrel with the London preachers has been already mentioned. It occurred a few months only previous to the affair at Bath. There is no denying it, that Charles was violently opposed to lay preachers, and was unreasonably jealous of their intriguing to obtain co-ordinate power with his brother, and of their intention to use such power in effecting a separation of Methodism from the Established Church. On Good Friday, 1779, he wrote to his brother: "The preachers do not love the Church of England. When we are gone, a separation is inevitable. Do you not wish to keep as many good people in the Church as you can? Something might be done now to save the remainder, if you

1779 Age 76 had resolution, and would stand by me as firmly as I will by you. Consider what you are bound to do as a clergyman; and what you do, do quickly."[1]

It was in such a frame of mind, that Charles Wesley heard of M'Nab's resisting the authority of his brother at Bath. Mr. Pawson, who says he was perfectly acquainted with the affair, tells us, in his manuscript memoir of Dr. Whitehead, that Charles Wesley "took fire at once, and highly resented Mr. M'Nab's behaviour. He prevailed upon his brother, after much strife and contention, to exclude Mr. M'Nab from the connexion; and, upon this condition, he promised to attend him to Bath. Accordingly the two brothers, accompanied by Dr. Coke and the Rev. Mr. Collins, went to Bath with all possible secrecy, and the sentence was pronounced upon poor Mr. M'Nab agreeably to Mr. Charles Wesley's wish. By this means, the Bath society was divided. Many of the people loved Mr. M'Nab, and thought it wrong that he should be condemned unheard. The society at Bristol also was thrown into great confusion; and, had it not been for the exertions of Dr. Coke, would have been divided like that at Bath. On the Sunday evening after Mr. Wesley's return to London, he brought the matter before the London society, and certainly degraded the preachers, and laid them low even in the dust at his feet. When he was gone from London, Mr. Charles, after the sacrament at the new chapel, prayed for his brother in the following words: 'Lord, preserve him from his rebellious sons: Though they curse him, do Thou bless him. Though they wish his death, do Thou prolong his life. Lord, stand between the living and the dead, and let not the curse of pride destroy them.'"

This was strange language to use, in prayer, and after a solemn sacrament; but it was not dissimilar to the language of a "Hymn for the Rev. John Wesley," which Charles composed, and which was "sung by the society in Bristol, on Sunday, December 5, 1779," only a fortnight after M'Nab's expulsion.

"Jesus, Thy hated servant own,
And send the glorious Spirit down,
In answer to our prayers;

[1] Whitehead's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 372.

While others curse, and wish him dead, 1779
Do Thou Thy choicest blessings shed, Age 76
And crown his hoary hairs."—etc., etc.[1]

Pawson was the superintendent of the London circuit, and felt it his duty to write to Charles Wesley, and remonstrate with him for using such language, at such a time, and in such a place. An interview followed; and Pawson adds: "We came to an explanation, and he was in high good humour; but I have reason to believe, he never forgave me. He made his brother believe, that Mr. M'Nab was only the tool of a violent party among the preachers, among whom there was a very powerful combination against his authority; and that, at the next conference, they would show themselves." Pawson adds: "There was not a single grain of truth in this. Not one preacher in the whole connexion was concerned in the business, save those who were stationed in the Bristol circuit. It is true, that the preachers in general thought that Mr. M'Nab was cruelly used; and so they do to this day."

Not to return to the subject, it may be added, that Dr. Whitehead states that, as the conference of 1780 drew near, Wesley "was evidently intimidated," and wrote to his brother requesting him to attend the conference. Charles answered as follows:

"My reasons against accepting your invitation to the conference are: (1) I can do no good; (2) I can prevent no evil; (3) I am afraid of being a partaker of other men's sins, or of countenancing them by my presence; (4) I am afraid of myself; you know I cannot command my temper, and you have not courage to stand by me. I cannot trust *your resolution;* unless you act with a vigour that is not in you, *conclamatum est*, our affairs are past hope.

"I am not sure, they will not prevail upon you to ordain them. You claim the *power*, and only say, 'It is not probable you shall ever exercise it.' Probability on one side implies probability on the other; and I want better security. So I am to stand by, and see the ruin of our cause! You know how far you may depend on me; let me know how far I may depend on you, and on our preachers. In the Bath affair, you acted with vigour for the first time; but you could not hold out. Unmindful of your power and your infirmity, you yielded to the rebel, instead of his yielding to you. You should not have employed him again till he had owned his fault. This quite overturned my confidence in you, which I should never

[1] *Christian Miscellany*, 1849, p. 57; and "Wesley Poetry," vol. viii., p. 415.

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have told you, had I not been compelled. If you think my advice can be of any use to you, I will attend you to Bristol, and be always within call."[1]

Poor Wesley! Wishful to repair a wrong, he had become reconciled to Mr. M'Nab, principally by the mediation of Mr. Pawson and the preachers in London;[2] but, by this, he had offended his brother, by whom he had been goaded to the rash act at Bath.

At the conference of 1780, M'Nab was restored to his place among his brethren, and was appointed to Sheffield. Charles Wesley was present, and, of course, was exceedingly dissatisfied. About a fortnight after, he wrote the following letter to his brother.

"I did not hope, by my presence at the conference, to do any good, or prevent any evil. So I told you in London. Yet I accepted your invitation, only because you desired it. And as I came merely to please you, I resolved not to contradict your *will* in anything. Your *will*, I perceived, was to receive Mr. M'Nab, unhumbled, unconvinced, into your confidence, and into your bosom. He came uninvited, and openly accused your curate for obeying your orders: you suffered it; and did not give Mr. M'Nab the gentlest reproof for disobeying them, and drawing others into his rebellion; and endeavouring to engage all the preachers in it; making an actual separation at Bath, and still keeping up his separate society. My judgment was, never to receive Mr. M'Nab as a preacher *till he acknowledged his fault.* But I submitted and attended in silence. It was much easier for me to say nothing, than to speak neither more nor less than you would approve. I was sometimes strongly tempted to speak; but, if I had opened my mouth, I should have spoiled all. Your design, I believed, was to keep all quiet. I allow you your merit. '*Tu maximus ille, es unus qui nobis* CEDENDO *restituis rem.*' By a very few words, I could have provoked your preachers to lay aside the mask; but that was the very thing you guarded against; and, I suppose, the reason for which you desired my presence was that I might be some sort of check to the independents. Still, I think it better for the people, that they (the preachers) should show themselves before your death than after it. You think otherwise; and I submit. '*Satis, jam satis spectata in te amicitia est mea;*' and I am perfectly satisfied with my own insignificancy. I have but one thing to do. The Lord make me ready for it!"[3]

This was an angry letter of a baffled man. It was grumbling in private what ought to have been said in public, or not to have

[1] Whitehead's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 379.
[2] Pawson's manuscript.
[3] Whitehead's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 380.

been said at all. The insinuation respecting the preachers was unfounded and unworthy. The desire that M'Nab should acknowledge his fault was unjust, for M'Nab was really the aggrieved party. Charles Wesley would have driven the preachers into rebellion; his brother, as ready to repair an injury as he was anxious to avoid committing one, restored unanimity and confidence. "There was nothing at the conference," writes John Pawson, "but peace, harmony, and love." 1779 Age 76

We only add, that Mr. M'Nab's subsequent appointments were honourable both to Wesley and himself. In 1780, he was sent to Sheffield; in 1781 to Manchester; and in 1782 to Newcastle. He then retired, "and resided for several years at Sheffield, where he was the pastor of a small congregation, who highly esteemed him; and there he finished his course about the year 1797."[1]

Mr. Smyth went back to Ireland; but, in 1782, became one of Wesley's London curates, with a salary of sixty guineas yearly.[2] In 1786, he was appointed minister of Bethesda chapel, Dublin;[3] where he rent the Methodist society, and took with him above a hundred persons, amongst whom were the richer members of the Dublin Methodists.[4] He then removed to Manchester, where he officiated as curate of St. Clement's and St. Luke's churches. He was the author of several publications, the chief of which were:—"The Fall and Recovery of Man. A Poem." 1777: 12mo, 71 pages. "James Poulson further Detected." 1778: 12mo, 58 pages. "Twelve Sermons on the most important Subjects." 1778: 12mo, 254 pages. "St. Paul against Calvin." 1809: 12mo, 115 pages. And "A Confutation of Calvinism." 1810: 12mo, 391 pages.

Much space has been occupied with the disturbances at Bath; but, considering the importance of the point at issue, the facts connected with it were too important to be omitted.

The year 1779, like most previous ones, was a year of trouble. Besides the anxiety and vexation arising out of Mr. M'Nab's affair, Wesley was still annoyed with virulent

[1] Atmore's "Methodist Memorial." [2] Manuscript.
[3] "Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon," vol. ii., p. 202.
[4] Life of John Valton, p. 100.

1779 attacks from his Calvinist opponents. His old friend, John
Age 76 Macgowan, published "The Foundry Budget Opened; or, the Arcanum of Wesleyanism Disclosed." The animus of Macgowan's pamphlet may be inferred from his motto on the title page:

> "A man so various, that he seemed to be
> Not one, but all mankind's epitome;
> Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong;
> Was everything by starts, but nothing long."

He tells his readers, that "for craft and cunning sophistry, he will match the Rev. Mr. John Wesley against any man that ever stained paper with pollution"; and throughout speaks of him in the most contemptuous terms.

Of course, this was too savoury a production to pass unnoticed by the *Gospel Magazine*. Wesley is accused, in the review of it, with using "absurd, unscriptural jargon and contradictions"; and with "robbing Father, Son, and Spirit, of their glory as a covenant God; and exalting the sinful, proud nature of fallen man; and militating against the whole tenor of Scripture, and of reformed Christianity, as professed by all protestant churches."

Another hostile publication was "Methodism and Popery dissected and compared; and the Doctrines of both proved to be derived from a Papal Origin." Besides attacking Whitefield, Rowland Hill, and others, the anonymous author of this scurrilous pamphlet learnedly remarks, that "it would be less difficult to paint Proteus, in all his fabled shapes, under one distinct figure, than to describe Wesley"; whom he is pleased to honour with epithets like the following: "a living monument of apostolic frenzy"; "Jesuit"; "rank Catholic;" "actor"; and "anabaptist."

This was far from being pleasant; but Wesley was used to it; and his character was too well established to need defence from such slanderous attacks. It may be doubted whether he took the trouble to read a tithe of the malignant diatribes launched against him.

While on the subject of books, it is due to Methodism to notice an interesting fact not generally known. The first Bible society, founded in Great Britain, and perhaps in the

world, was established in 1779, and was the work of Methodists. George Cussons and John Davies, after leaving the leaders' meeting in West Street chapel, entered into conversation, and, when near Soho Square, formed a resolution to endeavour to raise a fund for supplying soldiers with pocket Bibles. They and a dozen of their friends united themselves into a society for promoting this object. Their meetings were held once a month in the house of Mr. Dobson, of Oxford Street. John Thornton, Esq., of Clapham, became a generous subscriber. The first parcel of Bibles was sent from the vestry of Wesley's West Street chapel; and the first sermon on behalf of the society was preached in the same chapel, by the Rev. Mr. Collins, from the appropriate words, "And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore."[1] Thus arose "The Naval and Military Bible Society,"—twenty-five years before the formation of "The British and Foreign Bible Society" in 1804,—a society still in active operation, and we believe the oldest association for the circulation of the word of God, that now exists. 1779 Age 76

Wesley still employed the press, as well as pulpit, in defending and spreading truth. John Atlay was his book steward, of whose conscientiousness he had a high opinion. Hence the following unpublished letter, sent to Bradburn.

"EDINBURGH, *June* 19, 1779.

"DEAR SAMMY,—I suppose John Atlay has paid the money. He is cautious to an extreme. I *hear* what angry men say or write; but I do not often regard it. Lemonade will cure any disorder of the bowels, (whether it be with or without purging,) in a day or two. You do well to spread the prayer-meetings up and down. They seldom are in vain. Honest Andrew Dunlop[2] writes me word that the book money is stolen. Pray desire him to take care that the knave does not steal his teeth.

"I am, dear Sammy, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Wesley published, in 1779, the seventeenth extract from his journal, extending from September 13, 1773, to January 2, 1776; 12mo, 82 pages.

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1823, p. 737.

[2] The assistant of the Limerick circuit.

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Popery was beginning to be troublesome; for parliament, in the previous year, had passed a bill removing from the English and Irish papists the penalties and disabilities imposed upon them by the famous act, "for the further preventing the growth of popery," enacted in 1699. Wesley had been called a papist times without number; but now, in a time of danger, he proved himself one of popery's most trenchant opponents. His pamphlet, now issued, with the title, "Popery Calmly Considered," 12mo, 25 pages, was one of the most timely and valuable productions of his pen. Scores of such pamphlets have been given to the public; but not one superior to Wesley's. He writes: "In the following tract, I propose, first, to lay down and examine the chief doctrines of the Church of Rome: secondly, to show the natural tendency of a few of those doctrines; and that with all the plainness and all the calmness I can." "Mr. J. Russell," observes Charles Wesley, in a letter dated April 23, 1779, "tells me, some of the bitterest Calvinists are reconciled to you for the tract on popery. It should be spread immediately through the three kingdoms."[1] We shall meet with popery again; but, meantime, we wish the Methodist book committee and conference would do, at present, what Charles Wesley wished to be done ninety years ago. However urgent the case was in 1779, the necessity now is ninety times greater than it was then; and John Wesley's successors will be recreant to his protestant principles unless they do their duty as he did his.

It only remains, before concluding the present chapter, to notice Wesley's *Arminian Magazine*. This, like the volume for 1778, was, to a large extent, controversial, Wesley believing that "there never was more need, in the memory of man, of opposing the *Horrible Decree*, than at this day; for thousands, in every part of England, were still halting between two opinions, and were exceedingly perplexed on this account." Among other pieces, intended to refute the Calvinian theory, he republished his own "Predestination Calmly Considered," which he first printed in 1752. There are interesting lives of Bishop Bedell, Archbishop Usher, and Dr. Donne, the last mentioned by Wesley's own pen, though never included in his

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1789, p. 387.

collected works. There are short accounts of ten of his itinerant preachers, accompanied by their respective portraits, many of which he pronounces "really striking." There are ninety-three letters, most of which, says he, "are closely practical and experimental." There are about seventy poetical pieces, one of which, "Henry and Emma, a Dialogue," fills more than fourteen pages; a sort of love story, to which objections were not unreasonably raised. Wesley acknowledged that it was "not strictly religious"; but maintains that there was "nothing in it contrary to religion, nothing that can offend the chastest ears"; that it was "one of the finest poems in the English tongue, both for sentiment and language"; and that those who could "read it without tears must have a stupid and unfeeling heart." All this might be true; but, with all due deference to Wesley, there can hardly be two opinions, that it was out of its proper place when inserted in the *Arminian Magazine*.

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THE year 1780 will always be marked in English history. The nation was steeped in guilt and misery. War was raging on almost every side. Trade was paralysed; and taxes intolerable. Popery had been established in Canada; and, by the repealing of the statutes of the 11th and 12th of King William III., had received great encouragement in England. The Protestant Association sprung into existence; and the Gordon riots followed. The details of these events are full of profound interest and instruction; but our limited space prevents enlargement. Suffice it to say, that, in this serious crisis, Wesley took an active interest. He writes: "1780. January 18—Receiving more and more accounts of the increase of popery, I believed it my duty to write a letter concerning it, which was afterwards inserted in the public papers. Many were grievously offended; but I cannot help it; I must follow my own conscience."

The following was Wesley's unanswerable, though obnoxious letter.

"A Letter to the Printer of the *Public Advertiser*, occasioned by the late Act, passed in favour of Popery.

"CITY ROAD, *January* 21, 1780.

"SIR,—Some time ago, a pamphlet was sent me, entitled 'An Appeal from the Protestant Association to the People of Great Britain.' A day or two since, a kind of answer to this was put into my hands, which pronounces 'its style contemptible, its reasoning futile, and its object malicious.' On the contrary, I think the style of it is clear, easy, and natural; the reasoning, in general, strong and conclusive; the object, or design, kind and benevolent. And in pursuance of the same kind and benevolent design, namely, to preserve our happy constitution, I shall endeavour to confirm the substance of that tract by a few plain arguments.

"With persecution I have nothing to do. I persecute no man for his religious principles. Let there be as 'boundless a freedom in religion,' as any man can conceive. But this does not touch the point; I will set religion, true or false, utterly out of the question. Suppose the Bible, if you please, to be a fable, and the Koran to be the word of God. I consider not whether the Romish religion be true or false; I

build nothing on one or the other supposition. Therefore, away with all your commonplace declamation about intolerance and persecution in religion! Suppose every word of Pope Pius's creed to be true; suppose the council of Trent to have been infallible: yet, I insist upon it, that no government, not Roman Catholic, ought to tolerate men of the Roman Catholic persuasion. 1780 Age 77

"I prove this by a plain argument; let him answer it that can. That no Roman Catholic does or can give security for his allegiance or peaceable behaviour, I prove thus. It is a Roman Catholic maxim, established, not by private men, but by a public council, that 'no faith is to be kept with heretics.' This has been openly avowed by the council of Constance; but it never was openly disclaimed. Whether private persons avow or disavow it, it is a fixed maxim of the Church of Rome. But as long as it is so, it is plain that the members of that church can give no reasonable security, to any government, of their allegiance or peaceable behaviour. Therefore, they ought not to be tolerated by any government, protestant, Mahommedan, or pagan.

"You may say, 'Nay, but they will take an *oath* of allegiance.' True, five hundred oaths; but the maxim, 'no faith is to be kept with heretics,' sweeps them all away as a spider's web. So that still, no governors that are not Roman Catholics can have any security of their allegiance.

"Again, those who acknowledge the *spiritual power* of the pope can give no security of their allegiance to any government; but all Roman Catholics acknowledge this; therefore, they can give no security for their allegiance.

"The power of granting *pardons* for all sins, past, present, and to come, is, and has been, for many centuries, one branch of his *spiritual power*.

"But those who acknowledge him to have this spiritual power can give no security for their allegiance; since they believe the pope can pardon rebellions, high treasons, and all other sins whatsoever.

"The power of *dispensing* with any promise, oath, or vow, is another branch of the *spiritual power* of the pope. And all who acknowledge his spiritual power must acknowledge this. But whoever acknowledges the *dispensing power* of the pope can give no security for his allegiance to any government. Oaths and promises are none; they are light as air; a dispensation makes them all null and void.

"Nay, not only the pope, but even a *priest* has *power* to pardon sins! This is an essential doctrine of the Church of Rome. But they that acknowledge this cannot possibly give any security for their allegiance to any government. Oaths are no security at all; for the priest can pardon both perjury and high treason.

"Setting then religion aside, it is plain that, upon principles of reason, no government ought to tolerate men, who cannot give any security to that government for their allegiance and peaceable behaviour. But this no Romanist can do, not only while he holds that 'no faith is to be kept with heretics,' but so long as he acknowledges either priestly absolution or the *spiritual power* of the pope.

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"'But the late act,' you say, 'does not either *tolerate* or *encourage* Roman Catholics.' I appeal to matter of fact. Do not the Romanists themselves understand it as a toleration? You know they do. And does it not already (let alone what it *may* do by-and-by) *encourage* them to preach openly, to build chapels (at Bath and elsewhere), to raise seminaries, and to make numerous converts day by day, to their intolerant, persecuting principles? I can point out, if need be, several of the persons. And they are increasing daily.

"But 'nothing dangerous to English liberty is to be apprehended from them.' I am not certain of that. Some time since, a Romish priest came to one I knew; and, after talking with her largely, broke out, 'You are no heretic! You have the experience of a real Christian!' 'And would you,' she asked, 'burn me alive?' He said, 'God forbid! unless it were for the good of the church!'

"Now what security could she have had for her life, if it had depended on that man? The *good of the church* would have burst all the ties of truth, justice, and mercy. Especially when seconded by the absolution of a priest, or, if need were, a papal pardon.

"If any please to answer this, and to set his name, I shall probably reply; but the productions of anonymous writers I do not promise to take any notice of.

"I am, sir, your humble servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Wesley's arguments are irrefutable; and terrible is England's danger, at the present day, because such arguments, instead of being answered, have been dexterously, but disastrously, ignored by England's statesmen. Wesley's letter will probably be treated, by many, as they would treat an old almanack, out of date; but, on February 17, 1780, it evoked the unanimous thanks of the Protestant Association; and, in the same month, was published in the pages of Wesley's bitterest antagonist,—the *Gospel Magazine*,—with an editorial note, that it had "been almost universally approved of," and that it was "a production of real merit."

Wesley's letter was too damaging to the disloyalty and preposterous assumptions of popery, to pass unnoticed. His chief antagonist was the Rev. Arthur O'Leary, the son of peasant parents, and now a popish priest, in the fiftieth year of his age.

O'Leary's remarks on Wesley's letter made an octavo pamphlet of 101 pages. The friar tells the Methodist, that the temperature of Ireland's climate, and the quality of its

soil had cleansed the veins of its papists "from the *sour* and *acid* blood of the Scythians and Saxons." He writes: 1780 Age 77

"We are tender hearted, we are good natured, we have feelings. We shed tears on the urns of the dead; deplore the loss of hecatombs of victims slaughtered on the gloomy altars of religious bigotry; cry in seeing the ruins of cities over which fanaticism has displayed the funeral torch; and sincerely pity the blind zeal of our Scotch and English neighbours, whose constant character is to pity none, for erecting the banners of persecution, at a time when the inquisition is abolished in Spain and Milan, and the protestant gentry are caressed at Rome, and live unmolested in the luxuriant plains of France and Italy. We are too wise to quarrel about religion. The Roman Catholics sing their psalms in Latin, with a few inflections of the voice. Our protestant neighbours sing the same psalms in English, on a larger scale of musical notes. We never quarrel with our honest and worthy neighbours, the quakers, for not singing at all; nor shall we ever quarrel with Mr. Wesley for *raising his voice to heaven*, and warbling forth his canticles on whatever tune he pleases. We like *social harmony;* and, in *civil* music, hate *discordance.* Thus, when we go to the shambles, we never inquire into the butcher's religion, but into the quality of his meat. We care not whether the ox was fed in the pope's territories, or on the mountains of Scotland; provided the joint be good; for, though there be many *heresies* in old books, we discover neither *heresy* nor *superstition* in beef and claret. We divide them cheerfully with one another; and, though of different religions, we sit over the bowl with as much cordiality as if we were at a *lovefeast.*"

O'Leary's quaint jocularity and rounded periods are amusing; but they furnish not the slightest answer to Wesley's allegations. On March 23, Wesley replied to O'Leary, in a letter addressed to the editors of the *Freeman's Journal*, and from which the following is extracted.

"Mr. O'Leary's remarks are no more an answer to my letter, than to the Bull *Unigenitus.* His manner of writing is easy and pleasant; but might it not as well be more serious? The subject we are treating of is not a light one; it moves me to tears, rather than to laughter. I plead for the safety of my country; yea, for the children that are yet unborn. I would not have the Roman Catholics persecuted at all. I would only have them hindered from doing hurt: I would not put it in their power to cut the throats of their quiet neighbours." [1]

O'Leary published a "Rejoinder to Mr. Wesley's Reply," in which he was less jocular, but not more logical. Of Wesley's three reasons why it is not safe to tolerate papists, two were

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1781, p. 295.

1780 Age 77 left untouched, and one was played with and evaded. Such a controversialist scarcely deserved an answer; and, yet, Wesley supplemented his second letter by a third, dated Chester, March 31, 1780. After recapitulating his three reasons, Wesley writes:

"Nine parts in ten of Mr. O'Leary's remarks are quite wide of the mark. Not that they are wide of *his* mark, which is to introduce a plausible panegyric upon the Roman Catholics, mixed with keen invectives against the protestants, whether true or false it matters not. All this is admirably well calculated to inspire the reader with aversion to these heretics, and to bring them back to the holy, harmless, much injured Church of Rome! Close arguing he does not attempt; but he vapours, and skips to and fro, and rambles to all points of the compass, in a very lively and entertaining manner."

Wesley thus concludes his long letter:

"What security for my life can any man give me, till he utterly renounces the council of Constance? What security can any Romanist give a protestant, till this doctrine is publicly abjured? If Mr. O'Leary has anything more to plead for this council, I shall follow him step by step. But let him keep his word, and 'give a serious answer to a serious charge.' 'Drollery may come in when we are talking of roasting fowls'; but not when we talk of 'roasting men.'

"Would I then wish the Roman Catholics to be persecuted? I never said or hinted any such thing. I abhor the thought: it is foreign to all I have preached and wrote for these fifty years. But I would wish the Romanists in *England* (I had no others in view) to be treated still with the same lenity that they have been these sixty years; to be allowed both civil and religious liberty, but not permitted to undermine ours. I wish them to stand just as they did before the late act was passed: not to be persecuted or hurt themselves; but gently restrained from hurting their neighbours.

"I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Here the controversy ended.[2] O'Leary was baffled; and,

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1781, p. 352.

[2] As a specimen of popish jesuitry, it may be added, that O'Leary's Remarks upon Wesley's Letter were first printed in six successive numbers of the *Freeman's Journal;* but were afterwards reprinted in London with the following title, "Mr. O'Leary's Remarks on the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Letter in Defence of the Protestant Associations in England, to which are prefixed Mr. Wesley's Letters." This was a popish deception, intended, no doubt, to cast upon Wesley the odium incurred by the Protestant Association during the Gordon riots. The truth is: (1) Wesley had not written more than a few lines in defence of the appeal of that

to this day, the arguments in Wesley's letter of January 21, 1780, remain unanswered. Seven years afterwards, when at Cork, Wesley wrote: "A gentleman invited me to breakfast, with my old antagonist, Father O'Leary. I was not at all displeased at being disappointed. He is not the stiff, queer man that I expected; but of an easy, genteel carriage, and seems not to be wanting either in sense or learning." 1780 Age 77

It was during this controversy, and while Wesley was in the north of Ireland, that the fearful riots occurred, which are so unfortunately associated with the name of Lord George Gordon, and which were the cause of that nobleman's incarceration (rightly or wrongly) in the Tower of London. Here Wesley, after repeated invitations, visited him, and writes: "1780, December 19—I spent an hour with Lord George Gordon, at his apartment in the Tower. Our conversation turned upon popery and religion. He seemed to be well acquainted with the Bible; and had abundance of other books, enough to furnish a study. I was agreeably surprised to find he did not complain of any person or thing; and cannot but hope his confinement will take a right turn, and prove a lasting blessing to him."

We return to more congenial matters. Wesley spent the first two months of 1780 in London and its vicinity. On February 28, he started on his journey to the north. Among other places, he now, for the first time, preached at Delph. He writes: "April 7—I went to Delph, a little village upon the mountains, where a remarkable work of God is just broke out. I was just set down, when the minister sent me word, I was welcome to preach in his church. On hearing this, many people walked thither immediately, near a mile from the town; but, in ten minutes, he sent me word his mind was changed. We knew not then what to do, till the trustees of the independent meeting offered us the use of their house. It was quickly filled, and truly God bore witness to His word."

Association. (2) His two replies to O'Leary, published in the *Freeman's Journal*, were suppressed in O'Leary's pamphlet. (3) A spurious letter was inserted, and palmed on the public as genuine, which Wesley declared was not his, and one which he had never seen before O'Leary printed it.—(*Methodist Magazine*, 1781, p. 295.)

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The minister of the parish church was the Rev. Mr. Heginbotham, who had engaged Mr. Stones as his curate. Mr. Stones was a sportsman, fond of his dog and gun. On one occasion, a rough Yorkshireman told him, it would be better if he minded his study more and his gun less. The curate took the hint; his dogs and his guns were given up; he became a thorough Christian; his ministry was greatly blessed; an extensive religious awakening followed; meetings for prayer were convened in private houses; and not a few were scripturally converted. Opposition soon ensued, on the ground that the poor, by spending so much time in prayer, would neglect their work, and become chargeable to the parish. The curate was dismissed; the young converts applied to Joseph Benson, then at Manchester, for help; Methodist preaching was commenced; a room in Millgate hired; and a flourishing society was formed.[1] The case was named to Wesley; and, a fortnight before his visit, he signed the following legal looking document, which to a Methodist antiquarian will be welcome.

"*Whereas* for about twelve months last past, the people called Methodists have preached in a room at Delph, in Saddleworth, in the county of York,—the travelling preachers coming there regularly every fortnight from Manchester, besides local preachers occasionally on Sundays. And *Whereas* the last summer such crowds attended, that the room could not contain them, the society also increasing very fast, and a great likelihood of much good being done in the place,—It is, therefore, thought necessary that a preaching house be erected at Delph aforesaid, twelve yards long and eight wide. The expense of such a building, according to the plan laid down, will be vastly more than the society will be able to raise amongst themselves. They have, therefore, requested our consent to go amongst our societies, to ask the charitable contributions of such of our friends as would willingly encourage such an undertaking. This is, therefore, to certify that we approve of the measure, and recommend the same to our Christian friends everywhere, hoping they will readily and cheerfully contribute to the same."

"MANCHESTER, *March* 25, 1780. "JOHN WESLEY."[2]

This formalised certificate smacks of the office of Joseph Mellor, the Methodist attorney of the town of Delph; and Wesley must have been hard pressed for time when, instead of writing a statement of the case himself, he put his hand to

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1853, p. 785. [2] Manuscript.

such legal magniloquence. Suffice it to add, the chapel was built, with not more than £100 of debt resting upon the premisos.[1] 1780 Age 77

It was during this northern tour, that Wesley, for the first time, was denied the use of the church at Haworth. He writes: "Sunday, April 23—Mr. Richardson being unwilling that I should preach any more in Haworth church, Providence opened another; I preached in Bingley church, both morning and afternoon. This is considerably larger than the other."

It was either on this, or some future occasion, when Wesley was preaching in Bingley church, that a rich man in the congregation, who seemed to think that his wealth was a licence to practise bad manners, sneered at the preacher and at his sentiments. Wesley paused, and fixing his keen eye on the Dives sitting in the seat of the scornful, said: "I heed your sneers no more than I heed the fluttering of a butterfly; but I know what good breeding is as well as any gentleman in the land."

It was now that Wesley preached his first sermon in Blackburn. He writes: "April 27—I preached in Todmorden church with great enlargement of heart. In the afternoon we went on to Blackburn. It seemed the whole town was moved; and the question was where to put the congregation. We could not stand abroad because of the sun; so as many as could squeezed into the preaching house. All the chief men of the town were there." Mr. Banning was Wesley's host at Blackburn; and, on one occasion, took his venerable guest to see a neighbouring chapel which was in the course of being built. "Mr. Banning," said Wesley, "I have a favour to ask. Let there be no pews in the body of this chapel, except one for the leading singers. Be sure to make accommodation for the poor. *They* are God's building *materials* in the erecting of His church. The rich make good *scaffolding*, but bad *materials*."[2] Weighty words! One of Methodism's evil omens, at the present day, is a disregard of the advice which Wesley gave, namely, that, in building chapels, the Methodists should never fail to provide ample accommodation for the poor.

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1853, p. 786.
[2] Banning's Memoirs (private circulation).

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It was a sign of Wesley's growing popularity, that, though, forty years before, he had been indignantly expelled from the pulpits of the Established Church, he was now invited, in all parts of the country, by rectors, vicars, curates, and others, to favour them with his services. At Pateley Bridge, in 1752, Thomas Lee, the old itinerant, and his Methodist companions, were subjected to treatment the most barbarous; and, on applying to the Dean of Ripon for protection, were met with a churchman's scorn rather than a magistrate's just dealing. Now it was otherwise. Wesley writes: "1780, May 1—At Pateley Bridge, the vicar offered me the use of his church. Though it was more than twice as large as our preaching house, it was not near large enough to contain the congregation. How vast is the increase of the work of God! particularly in the most rugged and uncultivated places. How does He 'send the springs' of grace also 'into the valleys, that run among the hills!'"

Leaving Pateley, Wesley, for the first time, visited Ripon. He writes: "May 2—We came to Ripon, and observed a remarkable turn of providence: the great hindrance of the work of God in this place has suddenly disappeared; and the poor people, being delivered from their fear, gladly flock together, and hear His word. The new preaching house was quickly more than filled."

Four years previous to this, Thomas Dixon was one of the Ripon preachers, and, in his unpublished autobiography, wrote: "Upon our going to Ripon, we preached in a small room up a flight of stairs, and even this we were to leave at Martinmas. But, just at this time, Mr. T. Dowson, who had suffered much for the gospel's sake, bought the premises where an old barn and stable stood. He immediately pulled down the barn, and built a decent chapel and a dwelling house upon the site, and, with such expedition, that we were able to get into the shell of the new chapel by the time we had to leave the upstairs room. By this means, God gave the poor persecuted Methodists, in Ripon, a degree of rest they had never known before, and the work, from that time, gradually grew."

On leaving Ripon, Wesley proceeded "through a delightful country to the immense ruins of Garvaix Abbey," and thence

across the "horrid, dreary, enormous mountains" to Penrith, another place where he now, for the first time, preached. He writes: "May 5—In the evening, a large room, designed for an assembly, was procured for me at Penrith; but several of the poor people were struck with panic, for fear the room should fall. Finding there was no remedy, I went down into the court below, and preached in great peace to a multitude of well behaved people." 1780 Age 77

On May 11, Wesley reached Newcastle, and thence proceeded to Scotland. On his return southwards, we find him preaching at Durham, Darlington, Northallerton, Boroughbridge, and York. Making his way through Lincolnshire, he came to Newark, where, twenty years before, the mob had burnt the Methodist pulpit in the market place; and had not only pelted the preacher, Thomas Lee, with all sorts of missiles, and dragged him to the river Trent, where they ducked and dabbled him without mercy, but, to complete the whole, a painter came with his pot and brush, and bedaubed him most ludicrously. Wesley writes: "1780, June 12—Our friends at Newark were divided as to the place where I should preach. At length, they found a convenient place, covered on three sides, and on the fourth open to the street. It contained two or three thousand people well, who appeared to hear as for life. Only one big man, exceeding drunk, was very noisy and turbulent, till his wife (*fortissima Tyndaridarum!*) seized him by the collar, gave him two or three hearty boxes on the ear, and dragged him away like a calf. But, at length, he got out of her hands, crept in among the people, and stood as quiet as a lamb."

On June 13, Wesley wrote: "I accepted of an invitation from a gentleman at Lincoln, in which I had not set my foot for upwards of fifty years. At six in the evening, I preached in the castle yard to a large and attentive congregation. They were all as quiet as if I had been at Bristol. Will God have a people here also?" For seven years after this, there was not a Methodist in Lincoln.

After an interval of many years, Wesley preached again at Boston, where, in 1757, Alexander Mather, the first Methodist preacher there, had his face plastered with mire taken from the kennels of the streets, and his head laid open with a stone.

1780 Age 77 Wesley spent his birthday in Sheffield, and wrote: "June 28—I can hardly think I am entered this day into the seventy-eighth year of my age. By the blessing of God, I am just the same as when I entered the twenty-eighth. This hath God wrought, chiefly by my constant exercise, my rising early, and preaching morning and evening."

The next day, he preached his first and last sermon at Worksop. He says: "I was desired to preach at Worksop; but when I came, they had not fixed on any place. At length, they chose a lamentable one, full of dirt and dust, but without the least shelter from the scorching sun. This few could bear; so we had only a small company of as stupid people as I ever saw."

After this, Wesley made his way to London, where he spent a week; and, then, he and his brother set out for Bristol, for the purpose of holding his annual conference. He writes: "August 1—Our conference began. We have been always, hitherto, straitened for time. It was now resolved, 'For the future, we will allow nine or ten days for each conference; that everything, relative to the carrying on of the work of God, may be maturely considered.'"

The conference, in this instance, lasted from August 1 to August 9, inclusive. Its main business was a revision of the minutes of conferences already held. Several alterations were made, some of the chief being the following. It was no longer to be a rule, that Methodists were to endeavour to preach most where Wesley and his brother clergymen were allowed to preach in parish churches. Classmeetings were to be made more lively and profitable, by removing improper leaders; and care was to be taken, that those appointed were not only men of sound judgment, but truly pious. If a preacher could secure twenty hearers at five o'clock in the morning, he was to preach; if not so many, he was to sing and pray. "Observe," says Wesley to his preachers, "it is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but to save as many souls as you can, to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and, with all your power, to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord. And remember! a Methodist preacher is to mind every point, great and small, in the

Methodist discipline! Therefore, you will need all the sense you have, and to have all your wits about you." It was agreed, that the neglect of fasting was sufficient to account for their feebleness and faintness of spirit. They were continually grieving the Holy Spirit of God, by the habitual neglect of a plain duty. "Let you and I," says Wesley, "every Friday (beginning on the next), avow this duty throughout the nation, by touching no tea, coffee, or chocolate, in the morning, but, (if we want it,) half-a-pint of milk or water gruel. Let us dine on potatoes, and, (if we need it,) eat three or four ounces of flesh in the evening. At other times, let us eat no flesh suppers. These exceedingly tend to breed nervous disorders." The rule was rescinded, that no preacher ought to print anything without Wesley's approbation. The preachers were to join as one man in putting an end to the indecency of the people talking in the preaching houses, before and after service. Complaints having been made, that sluts had spoiled preachers' houses, Wesley writes: "Let none, that has spoiled one, ever live in another. But what a shame is this! A preacher's wife should be a pattern of cleanliness, in her person, clothes, and habitation. Let nothing slatternly be seen about her; no rags, no dirt, no litter. And she should be a pattern of industry; always at work, either for herself, her husband, or the poor. I am not willing that any should live in the Orphan House at Newcastle, or any preaching house, who does not conform to this rule." Complaints were also made, that people crowded into the preachers' houses as into coffee shops, without invitation; and it was ruled, that no person should, in future, come into a preacher's house, unless he wanted to ask a question.

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Some of these may appear to be minute matters; but they are not without interest as indicative of the defects of Methodists in the days of Wesley.

There is reason to believe, though the fact is not recorded in the minutes, that the Church question was again discussed at the conference of 1780. Hence the following letter, written to Miss Bosanquet.

"BRISTOL, *August* 5, 1780.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—I snatch time from the conference to write two or three lines. I am glad you have begun a prayer-meeting at Hunslet,

1780 Age 77 and doubt not it will be productive of much good. Hitherto, we have had a blessed conference. The case of the Church we shall fully consider by-and-by; and, I believe, we shall agree that none who leave the Church shall remain with us.

"I am, my dear sister, yours most affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Charles Wesley was present, and was far from satisfied. He purposed to attend no more of these annual synods, and wrote as follows:

"Why should I longer, Lord, contend,
My last important moments spend
In buffeting the air?
In warning those who will not see,
But rest in blind security,
And rush into the snare?

Prophet of ills, why should I live,
Or, by my sad forebodings, grieve
Whom I can serve no more?
I only can their loss bewail,
Till life's exhausted sorrows fail,
And the last pang is o'er."[2]

Poor Charles, alarmed lest the Methodists should leave the Church, retired from the conference to weep and die; John to rejoice and work.

Conference statistics have not been given annually; but the following figures will show the progress made during the decade of years ending at the conference of 1780.

	Circuits.	Itinerant Preachers.	Members.	Kingswood Collection.
1770	50	123	29,406	£218 4 5
1780	64	171	43,830	£402 1 9
Increase . .	14	48	14,424	£183 17 4

To these numbers, however, must be added the Methodists in the West Indies, and also 20 circuits, 42 itinerant preachers, and 8504 members of society in America.[3]

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 379.
[2] Jackson's Life of C. Wesley, vol. ii., p. 327.
[3] Minutes of Methodist Conferences in America.

The American conference met at Baltimore on April 24, and agreed to continue in close communion with the Church, and to permit "the friendly clergy" to preach and administer the sacraments in Methodist chapels. Hitherto, neither Asbury, nor any other of the preachers in America, had administered these Christian ordinances to the Methodist people; and, as the number of members was now rapidly increasing, this was becoming a momentous question. The want in England had been met, to some extent, by Wesley and his brother and their clerical assistants; but, in America, the Methodists had no ordained clergyman to render service like this. Besides, there the Methodists were very differently situated from what Methodists were in England. In this country, wherever there was a Methodist society there was a parish church, at which, if they chose, Methodists might attend on sacramental occasions. In America it was otherwise. Clergymen were few; and parish churches far distant from each other; and, in many instances, where Methodist societies had been formed, no church existed. The case was becoming serious. Were these thousands of American Methodists to be left without sacraments? Or were unordained Methodist preachers to administer sacraments? Or was an effort to be made, to send a clergyman of the Church of England to supply this lack of sacred service? Or was Wesley himself to assume episcopal functions, and, by ordination, turn his preachers into priests? These were serious difficulties to be surmounted. To deprive eight thousand converted people of the most sacred ordinances of the church, would have been a sin against the church's Head. To allow unordained preachers to administer baptism and the Lord's supper was a thing for which Wesley himself was not prepared; though who can question, that a man like Francis Asbury, whom God had so signally honoured, had as much right to do this as the most renowned priest or prelate in existence? An alternative remained, namely, either to send the American Methodists an ordained clergyman of the Church of England; or that Wesley should take upon himself the office of ordainer, and thus qualify his own itinerants for what was conceived to be a higher function than that of preaching the infinitely great and everlasting truths of Christ's glorious gospel.

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Was Wesley prepared for such a step as this? Fortunately, this is a point on which we are not left to speculate. In a letter to his brother, dated June 8, 1780, he writes: "Read Bishop Stillingfleet's 'Irenicon,' or any impartial history of the ancient church, and I believe you will think as I do. I verily believe, I have as good a right to ordain, as to administer the Lord's supper. But I see abundance of reasons why I should not use that right, unless I was turned out of the Church. At present, we are just in our place."[1]

As yet, Wesley, for "abundance of reasons," hesitated to ordain his preachers; and, hence, the only remaining expedient was to endeavour to secure an ordained clergyman of the Church of England; and this he attempted. The following letter was addressed to Dr. Lowth, bishop of London, two months after the date of his letter to his brother Charles. The reader will perceive, that it was written the day after the close of the Bristol conference. It ought to be premised that, previous to this, Wesley had applied to the bishop for a clerical helper, and had met with a refusal.

"*August* 10, 1780.

"MY LORD,—Some time since, I received your lordship's favour, for which I return your lordship my sincere thanks. These persons did not apply to the Society," [for Propagating Christian Knowledge in Foreign Parts,] "because they had nothing to ask of them. They wanted no salary for their minister: they were themselves able and willing to maintain him. They, therefore, applied, by me, to your lordship, as members of the Church of England, and desirous so to continue, begging the favour of your lordship, after your lordship had examined him, to ordain a pious man who might officiate as their minister.

"But your lordship observes, 'There are three ministers in that country already.' True, my lord: but what are three, to watch over all the souls in that extensive country? Will your lordship permit me to speak freely? I dare not do otherwise. I am on the verge of the grave, and know not the hour when I shall drop into it. Suppose there were threescore of those missionaries in the country, could I in conscience recommend these souls to their care? Do they take any care of their own souls? If they do, (I speak it with concern,) I fear they are almost the only missionaries in America that do. My lord, I do not speak rashly: I have been in America; and so have several with whom I have lately conversed. And both I and they know, what manner of men the greater part of these are.

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 137.

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They are men who have neither the power of religion, nor the form; men that lay no claim to piety, nor even decency.

"Give me leave, my lord, to speak more freely still: perhaps it is the last time I shall trouble your lordship. I know your lordship's abilities and extensive learning: I believe, what is far more, that your lordship fears God. I have heard, that your lordship is unfashionably diligent in examining the candidates for holy orders; yea, that your lordship is generally at the pains of examining them *yourself.* Examining them! in what respects? Why whether they understand a little *Latin* and *Greek;* and can answer a few trite questions in the science of divinity! Alas, how little does this avail! Does your lordship examine, whether they serve *Christ* or *Belial?* Whether they love God or the world? Whether they ever had any serious thoughts about heaven or hell? Whether they have any real desire to save their own souls, or the souls of others? If not, what have they to do with holy orders? and what will become of the souls committed to their care?

"My lord, I do by no means despise learning: I know the value of it too well. But what is this, particularly in a Christian minister, compared to piety? What is it in a man that has no religion? 'As a jewel in a swine's snout.'

"Some time since, I recommended to your lordship a plain man, whom I had known above twenty years, as a person of deep, genuine piety, and of unblamable conversation. But he neither understood Greek nor Latin; and he affirmed, in so many words, that 'he believed it was his duty to preach, whether he was ordained or no.' I believe so too. What became of him since, I know not. But I suppose he received *presbyterian* ordination; and I cannot blame him if he did. He might think any ordination better than none.

"I do not know, that Mr. Hoskins had any favour to ask of the Society. He asked the favour of your lordship to ordain him, that he might minister to a little flock in America. But your lordship did not see good to ordain *him:* but your lordship did see good to ordain, and send to America, other persons, who knew something of Greek and Latin; but knew no more of saving souls, than of catching whales.

"In this respect, also, I mourn for poor America; for the sheep scattered up and down therein. Part of them have no shepherds at all, particularly in the northern colonies; and the case of the rest is little better, for their own shepherds pity them not. They cannot, for they have no pity on themselves, they take no thought or care about their own souls.

"Wishing your lordship every blessing from the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, I remain, my lord, your lordship's dutiful son and servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Did his lordship ever receive, from any other "dutiful son

[1] Whitehead's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 392.

1780 Age 77 and servant," a letter like this? We doubt it. Wesley was foiled in his attempt to obtain *episcopal* ordination for an American Methodist preacher: no wonder, that, soon after, he administered ordination himself.

Before proceeding with Wesley's history, the insertion of a selection of his letters, belonging to this period, may be acceptable.

It is a terrible thing to write a dangerous book. When Joseph Benson was a young man, he read Dr. Watts's "Glory of Christ as God-man," and became a convert to his doctrine of the pre-existence of our Lord's *human soul.* Speaking his mind too freely upon this unscriptural dogma, Benson was suspected to be an Arian, and was represented as such, by Dr. Coke, all over the kingdom.[1] At the conference of 1780, Coke accused him of holding the Arian heresy; the matter was sifted; Benson was acquitted; and Coke offered to ask his pardon. Still, Benson, for years afterwards, held Dr. Watts's dangerous speculation; and it was not until he undertook the revision of Fletcher's manuscripts, that he laid aside the expression, "*pre-existent soul of Christ;*" "an expression," says he, "which neither reason, nor Scripture, nor antiquity, will warrant our using."[2]

Dr. Watts's pernicious book, and also the Gordon riots, (at this time raging,) are referred to in the following extract from a letter to Charles Wesley.

"*June* 8, 1780.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I would not read over Dr. Watts's tract for a hundred pounds. You may read it, and welcome. I will not, dare not, move those subtle, metaphysical controversies. Arianism is not in question; it is Eutychianism or Nestorianism. But what are they? What neither I nor any one else understands. But they are what tore the eastern and western churches asunder.

[1] Dr. Coke, a young man of thirty-three, displayed, at this period, a fussy officiousness, which scarcely redounded to his honour. He wrote to Bradburn, to the effect, that he suspected that he also was an Arian; though it was only four years before, that Thomas Taylor, at the London conference, had blamed Bradburn for "preaching *too much* on the Divinity of Christ, and for being *too warm against the Arians.*" ("Memoirs of Bradburn," p. 225.) In an unpublished letter addressed to Bradburn, and dated October, 1779, Wesley asks: "Is there any truth in the report that John Hampson has converted you to Arianism?"

[2] Benson's Life, by Macdonald, p. 108.

"It is well I accepted none of Lord George's invitations. If the government suffers this tamely, I know not what they will not suffer. 1780 Age 77

"Mr. Collins is not under my direction; nor am I at all accountable for any steps he takes. He is not in connection with the Methodists. He only helps us now and then. I will suffer no disputing at the conference.

"Undoubtedly many of the patriots seriously intend to overturn the government; but the hook is in their nose.

"Peace be with you all! "JOHN WESLEY."[1]

The Mr. Collins, mentioned in the above extract, was Brian Bury Collins, of the university of Cambridge, who, without ever receiving a regular appointment, continued to assist Wesley, in various parts of the kingdom, until Wesley's death in 1791. A number of his manuscript letters, all written in 1779 and 1780, now lie before us, from which we learn, that he regarded himself as having "an unlimited preaching commission"; and that one of his great objects was to unite Wesley's and Whitefield's followers. "I could freely die," says he, "to see the Tabernacles and Foundery reconciled." He began the year 1779 in the north of England, where he sometimes preached five or six times a day. He then removed to London, Bristol, and the west, where his health failed. In May, 1780, he was among his relatives at Linwood, and wrote: "I am not yet recovered from my late illness, though I am much better than I have been. My relations here receive me with more cordiality than I expected. I find the Divine presence in the churches where I preach; but what the Lord designs to do with me I cannot tell. Lately, I have thought of spending a few weeks at Cambridge. I have also had fresh desires of being in full orders." In pursuance of this, Mr. Collins went to St. John's college, Cambridge, where, in July 1780, he took his master of arts degree. By advice of the two Wesleys, he sought ordination; and the dowager Lady Townsend gave him a recommendatory letter to the Bishop of Chester, requesting that the rite might be administered in private; but the bishop, having heard of his irregular preaching, hesitated until he had time to confer with his brother bishops. Ordination was ultimately obtained;

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 137.

1780 Age 77 Collins married, and, for a time, was assistant to David Simpson, at Macclesfield; after this, he again became a rover, and preached in Wesley's and Lady Huntingdon's chapels, and wherever else he had a chance. He writes: "I wish to do good unto all. I do not love one and dislike another. I can unite with all who are united to Jesus. I care not for names in the least."[1]

These glimpses of a man whom Wesley, to the end of life, repeatedly mentions in his journals, will not be unwelcome. Of his subsequent career we know nothing; except that its close was not as bright as its beginning. A son of his lies interred in the burial ground of the new chapel in City Road.[2]

One of the legislative acts of the conference of 1780 was to enforce the old rule, that, in Methodist meeting-houses, the men and women should sit apart. In galleries, where they had always sat together, they might do so still; but in all new erected galleries, and in the seats below, the old rule was to be rigidly observed. "If," said Wesley, "I come into any new house, and see the men and women together, I will immediately go out. I hereby give public notice of this. Pray let it be observed."[3]

This sounds strangely at the present day; but, for some reason, it was with Wesley a matter of importance. Hence also the following unpublished letter to the leaders at Sheffield.

"BRISTOL, *September* 4, 1780.

"MY DEAR BRETHREN,—Let the persons, who purpose to subvert the Methodist plan, by mixing men and women together in your chapel, consider the consequence of so doing. First, I will never set foot in it more. Secondly, I will forbid any collection to be made for it in any of our societies.

"I am, my dear brethren, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Two more letters, now for the first time given to the public, will be welcome. They were addressed to Samuel Bradburn, who had been three years in Ireland, and was now to remove to Keighley.

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[1] Manuscript letters. [2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 117. [3] Minutes, 1780.

"NEAR BRISTOL, *September* 16, 1780. 1780
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"DEAR SAMMY,—I wanted to have Betsy" [Mrs. Bradburn] "a little nearer me. And I wanted her to be acquainted with her twin soul, Miss Ritchie, the fellow to whom I scarce know in England. But I do not like your crossing the sea till your children are a little stronger. If there was stormy weather it might endanger their lives. Therefore, it is better you should stay in Ireland a little longer. Athlone circuit will suit you well; and John Bredin may be at Keighley in *your place*.

"Now read over the minutes concerning the office of an assistant, and exert yourself as to every branch of it. I fear the late assistant neglected many articles; dispersing the books in particular.

"My love to Betsy. Let her love Molly Pennington for my sake.

"I am, etc., J. WESLEY."

"LONDON, *October* 28, 1780.

"DEAR SAMMY,—I am glad you are safe landed at Keighley. You will find there

'. . . a port of ease
From the rough rage of stormy seas.'

"There are many amiable and gracious souls in Cork; but there are few in the whole kingdom of Ireland to be named, (either for depth of sense or grace,) with many, very many persons in Yorkshire, particularly the west riding. Go to Betsy Ritchie, at Otley, and then point me out such a young woman as she in Ireland.

"I think lemonade would cure any child of the flux.

"Now be exact in every branch of discipline; and you will soon find what a people you are among.

"I am, with tender love to Betsy, dear Sammy, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

The following letter, kindly supplied by the Rev. Thomas W. Smith, and now for the first time published, was addressed "To Mr. Valton, at the preaching house, in Manchester." Oldham Street chapel was now in course of erection, and was opened by Wesley seven months afterwards.

"BRISTOL, *October* 1, 1870.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I expected the state of Manchester circuit to be just such as you have found it. But the power of the Lord is able to heal them. I fear S. Mayers was left unemployed, because she loved perfection. If you find a few more of the same spirit, I believe you will find them employment. The accommodations everywhere will mend, if the preachers lovingly exert themselves. I am glad you take some pains for the new chapel. Our brother Brocklehurst will do anything that is reasonable.

"In one thing only you and I do not agree; but, perhaps, we shall

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when we have prayed over it: I mean, the giving me an extract of your life. I cannot see the weight of your reasons against it. 'Some are superficial.' What then? All are not; brother Mather's and Haime's in particular. Add one to these; a more weighty one, if you can. You know what to omit, and what to insert. I really think you owe it (in spite of shame and natural timidity) to God and me and your brethren. Pray for light in this matter.

"I am, your affectionate friend and brother,

"J. WESLEY."

The next, though short, is not devoid of interest. For the first time, it was published in the *Watchman* newspaper, as recently as October 12, 1870; and was written on the same day as the foregoing one.

"BRISTOL, *October* 1, 1780.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Joseph Bradford has been at the gate of death; but is now so far recovered, that he thinks to set out to-morrow morning, with me and his wife, for London.

"Mr. Brackenbury likewise seems to be better, with regard to his bodily health; but he is married! And I shall not be much disappointed if he soon takes leave of the Methodists.

"I am, your affectionate brother,

"J. WESLEY."

The following, which has not before been published, is kindly furnished by Charles Reed, Esq., M.P.

"LONDON, *November* 3, 1780.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Disorderly walkers are better excluded than retained; and I am well satisfied you will exclude no others. I am glad you have made a beginning at Trowbridge. If it be possible, say not one offensive word. But you must declare the plain, genuine gospel; and, sooner or later, God will give you His blessing.

"I am, your affectionate friend and brother,

"J. WESLEY."

Another, equally characteristic, was sent to Zechariah Yewdall, stationed in "Glamorganshire" circuit, which extended (from Llanelly in Wales to Calvert in Gloucestershire) above a hundred miles, and was traversed regularly every month. Mr. Yewdall was now in the second year of his itinerancy, and, at Monmouth, had met with brutal treatment.[1] The letter also refers to the principle involved in Mr. M'Nab's affair.

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1795, p. 268.

"LONDON, *December* 3, 1780. 1780

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—You mistake one thing. It is I, not the conference, (according to the twelfth rule,) that station the preachers; but I do it at the time of the conference, that I may have the advice of my brethren. But I have no thought of removing you from the Glamorganshire circuit; you are just in your right place. But you say, 'Many of the people are asleep.' They are; and you are sent to awaken them out of sleep. 'But they are dead.' True; and you are sent to raise the dead. Good will be done at Monmouth[1] and Neath in particular. Where no good can be done, I would leave the old, and try new places. But you have need to be all alive yourselves, if you would impart life to others. And this cannot be without much self denial. Age 7

"I am, dear Zachary, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

After the conference at Bristol was concluded, Wesley set out for Cornwall. Some time before this, Sir Harry Trelawney, a student of Christ Church, Oxford, had become a zealous revivalist, and had begun to preach at West Looe, where, in 1777, he became the pastor of a congregation of his own raising, and which worshipped in a meeting-house fitted up at his own expense. The novelty of the proceeding, and the rank of the preacher, created great excitement. Sir Harry, the descendant of one of the seven bishops who were committed to the Tower in the reign of James II., was made the hero of a witty book, written by a clergyman of the Church of England, and entitled, "The Spiritual Quixote; or the History of Geoffry Wildgoose, Esq." 3 vols., 12mo: 1773. The preaching baronet vindicated his nonconformity in "A Letter addressed to the Rev. Thomas Alcock, Vicar of Runcorn." For a time, the Rev. John Clayton was his assistant, but, in 1778, removed to the Weigh House congregation, in London. Soon after, Sir Harry returned to Oxford; procured ordination in the national establishment; was made a country rector in the west of England; whilst his chapel at West Looe was ignominiously changed into a house for converting barley into malt. He died in 1834.

It was about the time of Wesley's visit to Cornwall, that

[1] Wesley's words were verified. At Monmouth, Mr. Yewdall was mobbed by a bellowing rabble; but the society increased one third.

[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 10.

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he wrote the subjoined letter. Sir Harry had been a Calvinist, and had been patronised by the Countess of Huntingdon's connexion; but, having renounced his Calvinian tenets, he was now regarded with disfavour. Some communication had passed between him and Wesley on the subject; Wesley knew his danger; and wrote to him as follows.

"For a long time, I have had a desire to see you, but could not find an opportunity. Indeed, I had reason to believe my company would not be agreeable; as you were intimate with those who think they do God service by painting me in the most frightful colours. It gives me much satisfaction to find, that you have escaped out of the hands of those warm men. It is not at all surprising, that they should speak a little unkindly of you too in their turn. It gave me no small satisfaction to learn from your own lips the falsehood of their allegation. I believed it false before, but could not affirm it so positively as I can do now.

"Indeed, it would not have been without precedent, if from one extreme you had run into another. This was the case with that great man, Dr. Taylor. For some years, he was an earnest Calvinist; but, afterwards, judging he could not go far enough from that melancholy system, he ran, not only into Arianism, but into the very dregs of Socinianism.

"You have need to be thankful on another account likewise; that is, that your prejudices against the Church of England are removing. Having had an opportunity of seeing several of the churches abroad, and having deeply considered the several sorts of Dissenters at home, I am fully convinced, that our own Church, with all her blemishes, is nearer the scriptural plan than any other in Europe.

"I sincerely wish you may retain your former zeal for God; only, that it may be a zeal according to knowledge. But there certainly will be a danger of your sinking into a careless, lukewarm state, without any zeal or spirit at all. As you were surfeited with an irrational, unscriptural religion, you may easily slide into no religion at all; or into a dead form, that will never make you happy either in this world, or in that which is to come.

"Wishing every spiritual blessing, both to Lady Trelawney and you,

"I am, dear sir, your affectionate servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Wesley, at the end of August, returned to Bristol, and here he spent the month of September. He then set out for London, which he reached on October 7. A week later

[1] Whitehead's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 395.

he made a tour to Tunbridge Wells, and other towns in Kent. After this, we find him, as usual, visiting the societies in Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, and Bedfordshire. The last month of the year was chiefly employed in London. He read to the society, and explained, the Large Minutes of conference, recently published; and wrote: "I desire to do all things openly and above board. I would have all the world, and especially all of our society, see not only the steps we take, but the reasons why we take them." He visited Lord George Gordon in the Tower. He went with some of his friends to the British Museum. He wrote his well known sermon on "This is the true God and eternal life," fully establishing the doctrine which Joseph Benson, at the conference, had been accused of denying—the Divinity of Christ.[1] He likewise wrote his "Thoughts upon Jacob Behmen," allowing the Teuton to be a good man, but charging him with propounding "a crude, indigested philosophy, supported neither by Scripture, nor reason, nor anything but his own *ipse dixit*;" and with using "language that was never used since the world began, queerness itself, mere dog Latin." "None," says Wesley, "can understand it without much pains, perhaps not without reading him thrice over. I would not read him thrice over on any consideration. (1) Because it would be enough to crack any man's brain to brood so long over such unintelligible nonsense; and (2) because such a waste of time might provoke God to give me up to a strong delusion to believe a lie."[2] 1780 Age 77

Wesley concludes the year with the following entry in his journal. "Sunday, December 31—We renewed our covenant with God. We had the largest company that I ever remember; perhaps two hundred more than we had last year. And we had the greatest blessing. Several received either a sense of the pardoning love of God, or power to love Him with all their heart."

Happy, happy old man! "I do not remember," said he, only nine days before the year 1780 was ended, "I do

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1781, p. 189.
[2] Wesley's Works, vol. ix., p. 491.

1780 Age 77 not remember to have felt lowness of spirits for one quarter of an hour since I was born."[1]

It only remains to notice Wesley's publications in 1780; and this shall be done as briefly as possible. His letters on popery, his revised minutes of the conferences, and his Thoughts upon Behmen, have been already mentioned. Besides these, there were—

1. "Directions for Renewing our Covenant with God." 12mo, 23 pages.

2. "Reflections on the Rise and Progress of the American Rebellion." 12mo, 96 pages.

3. "The History of Henry, Earl Moreland." Abridged. 2 vols., 12mo.

It has been already stated, that this was a novel, written by Mr. Brooke, and originally published, in five vols., in 1766, with the title, "The Fool of Quality." Dr. Adam Clarke once stated, that Mr. Brooke's nephew declared to him, that, "with the exception of a few touches of colouring, everything in the book was founded in fact—even the very incidents were facts."[2] This might be so; but still the colouring made the work a fiction; and that an old evangelist, like Wesley, bordering on fourscore years of age, should revise, abridge, publish, and circulate a novel, has always been a perplexity to a certain section of Wesley's admirers. John Easton, one of his itinerants, belonged to these. After John had very freely condemned the conduct of his great leader, Wesley proposed to him the following interrogations in reference to three of the personages in this remarkable book.

Wesley.—"Did you read Vindex, John?"
Easton.—"Yes, sir."
W.—"Did you *laugh*, John?"
E.—"No, sir."
W.—"Did you read Damon and Pythias, John?"
E.—Yes, sir."
W.—"Did you *cry*, John?"
E.—"No, sir."
W., lifting up his eyes, and clasping his hands, exclaimed: "O earth—earth—earth!"[3]

[1] *Methodist Magazine* 1781, p. 185.
[2] Everett's Life of Clarke. [3] Ibid.

Whatever may be thought and said on the general subject of novels and novel reading, all must admit, that "Henry, Earl Moreland," is one of the most unexceptionable ever published. Wesley writes: 1780 Age 77

"I recommend it as the most excellent in its kind, that I have seen, either in the English or any other language. The lowest excellence therein is the style, which is not only pure in the highest degree, not only clear and proper, every word being used in its true genuine meaning, but frequently beautiful and elegant, and, where there is room for it, truly sublime. But what is of far greater value is the admirable sense, which is conveyed herein: as it sets forth in full view most of the important truths, which are revealed in the oracles of God. And these are not only well illustrated, but also proved in an easy, natural manner: so that the thinking reader is taught, without any trouble, the most essential doctrines of religion.

"But the greatest excellence of all in this treatise is, that it continually strikes at the heart. It perpetually aims at inspiring and increasing every right affection. And it does this, not by dry, dull, tedious precepts, but by the liveliest examples that can be conceived: by setting before your eyes one of the most beautiful pictures, that was ever drawn in the world. The strokes of this are so delicately fine, the touches so easy, natural, and affecting, that I know not who can survey it with tearless eyes, unless he has a heart of stone. I recommend it, therefore, to all those who are already, or desire to be, lovers of God and man."

The whole of this is strictly accurate; and if this is not enough to justify Wesley in the eyes of faultfinders, like *earthy* John Easton, the task of doing so must be abandoned as a hopeless one. Besides, it may be added, that, if Wesley sinned, his successors copied his example; for, twenty-two years after Wesley's death, the conference book-room published a fourth edition of the novel which Wesley first published in 1780.

4. "A Collection of Hymns for the use of the People called Methodists." 12mo, 520 pages.

Up to this period, the hymns and the books used in Methodist congregations had been endlessly varying; now Wesley issued a book which, with slight alterations, has been used from that time to this; and prefixed the preface which has been read by millions; and from which, therefore, we must content ourselves with quoting only the concluding hint, which is far more needed now than even when first published.

"Many gentlemen have done my brother and me (though without

1780 Age 77 naming us) the honour to reprint many of our hymns. Now they are perfectly welcome so to do, provided they print them just as they are. But I desire they would not attempt to mend them; for they really are not able. None of them is able to mend either the sense or the verse. Therefore, I must beg of them one of these two favours: either to let them stand just as they are, to take them for better for worse; or to add the true reading in the margin, or at the bottom of the page; that we may no longer be accountable either for the nonsense or for the doggerel of other men."

5. Wesley's only other publication, in 1780, was his *Arminian Magazine*, 8vo, 683 pages.[1] The work contains Goodwin's Paraphrase on Romans ix.; an extract from Bird's "Fate and Destiny, inconsistent with Christianity;" lives of Armelle Nicolas and Gregory Lopes; short accounts of Thomas Lee, Alexander Mather, John Haime, Thomas Mitchell, Thomas Taylor, Thomas Hanson, Thomas Hanby, and John Mason. There are about fifty valuable letters; and about seventy poetic pieces. Also Wesley's "Thought on Necessity," and "Thoughts upon Taste."

To enlarge concerning these is superfluous. The volume was quite equal to the former ones; though Wesley confesses, that the portraits were not yet such as he desired; and declares, that he will have better, or none at all.

[1] I am not quite sure of this. In 1780, a 12mo tract of 12 pages was published with the following title:—"Jesus, altogether Lovely: or, a Letter to some of the Single Women of the Methodist Society. London: Printed by R. Hawes; and sold at the New Chapel, in the City Road; and at the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Preaching Houses, in town and country. 1780." The letter is dated, "Hoxton, March 10, 1763." It enforces chastity, poverty, and obedience; and is written in a style strongly resembling Wesley's.

1781.

WESLEY purposed to visit Ireland in 1781, but was prevented doing so; and, hence, the months he was accustomed to spend in that island were spent in an irregular itinerancy through England and Wales. He now entered on the seventy-ninth year of his age; and, to obtain something like a correct idea of his amazing energy and toil, it may be useful to trace his footsteps more minutely than we have been wont to do during the last few years. 1781 Age 78

He writes: "January 1, 1781—We began, as usual, the service at four" (in the morning) "praising Him who, maugre all our enemies, had brought us safe to the beginning of another year."

At this period, his nephews, Charles and Samuel Wesley, were attracting great attention by their musical performances. They had won the friendship of the great musical composers, Dr. Boyce, Dr. Nares, and Dr. Burney. Lords Le Despencer, Barrington, Aylesford, Dudley, and others, were enraptured with them. The Earl of Mornington, for some years, breakfasted weekly with them. Dr. Howard, the distinguished organist, declared concerning Samuel, that he seemed to have "dropped down from heaven." Charles was introduced to George III., with whom he became a great favourite. The result of this unparalleled popularity was the institution, in Wesley's brother's house, of the series of select concerts, already referred to, which were continued for several years, the regular subscribers varying in number from thirty to fifty, though eighty persons were often present; including not a few of the English nobility, besides the Bishop of London, and the Danish and Saxon ambassadors. On January 25, Wesley was there, and wrote: "I spent an agreeable hour at a concert of my nephews. But I was a little out of my element among lords and ladies. I love plain music and plain company best."

It was during this brief sojourn in London, in the beginning

1781 Age 78 of 1781, that Wesley wrote his stinging sermon on "Little children, keep yourselves from idols";[1] and his able discourse on, "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." In the former he terribly belabours the man of business, who retires from the activities of town to the laziness of country life, where his only employment is altering, enlarging, rebuilding, or decorating the old mansion house he has purchased, and improving the stables, outhouses, and grounds, without ever thinking of the God of heaven any more than he thinks of the king of France. In the latter sermon, he strikes a heavy blow at the heresy of Dr. Watts, which Benson, at the conference of 1780, had been accused of embracing. He writes:

"I cannot at all believe the ingenious dream of Dr. Watts, concerning the glorious humanity of Christ, which he supposes to have existed before the world began, and to have been endued with, I know not what, astonishing powers. Nay, I look upon this to be an exceeding dangerous, yea, mischievous hypothesis; as it quite excludes the force of very many Scriptures, which have been hitherto thought to prove the Godhead of the Son. And, I am afraid, it was the grand means of turning that great man aside from the faith once delivered to the saints; that is, if he was turned aside, if that beautiful soliloquy be genuine, which is printed among his posthumous works, wherein he so earnestly beseeches the Son of God not to be displeased, because he cannot believe Him to be coequal and coeternal with the Father."

Both these sermons enriched the *Arminian Magazine* for 1781. In fact, it is to the establishment of that periodical, that we are indebted for many of the most elaborated sermons that Wesley ever published. Besides the two above mentioned, Wesley, during the year 1781, wrote at least three others. His sermon on "Zeal" is a remarkable production, and was not inappropriate to the circumstances of a period when so much excitement existed concerning popery. He says:

"Fervour for *opinion* is not Christian zeal. How innumerable are the mischiefs which this species of false zeal has occasioned in the Christian world! How many of the excellent of the earth have been cut off, by zealots, for the senseless opinion of transubstantiation! Fervour for *indifferent things* is not Christian zeal. How warmly did Bishop Ridley, and Bishop Hooper, and other great men of that age, dispute about the *sacerdotal vestments!* How eager was the contention, for almost a

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1781, p. 303.

hundred years, for and against wearing a surplice! Oh, shame to man! I would as soon have disputed about a straw, or a barleycorn!"[1] 1781 Age 78

Another of his homilies, written in 1781,[2] was his able discourse on the province of reason in matters of religion; and another was his unique sermon on "The Brute Creation," in which he unhesitatingly propounds the doctrine, not only that the brute creation will live again, but likewise, that, when restored, they will possess a far higher state of being than they possess at present; in fact, that they will then be made what beasts, birds, insects, and fishes were when first created.[3] This may seem a wild theory for an octogenarian to advance; but it deserves more attention, on that account, than if it had been an imaginative rocket let off by a stripling in his teens.

While on the subject of sermons, it may be added, that it was now Wesley published, in his *Arminian Magazine*, his remarkable discourse on the "Danger of Riches,"—the first of a series on that subject, which he continued to issue to the end of life, and in which wealthy Methodists and others are lashed with terrific power. "I do not remember," says he, "that in threescore years I have heard one sermon preached on this subject. And what author, within the same term, has declared it from the press? I do not know one. I have seen two or three who just touch upon it; but none that treat of it professedly. I have myself frequently touched upon it in preaching, and twice in what I have published to the world: once in explaining our Lord's sermon on the mount, and once in the discourse on the mammon of unrighteousness. But I have never yet either published or preached any sermon expressly upon the subject. It is high time I should; that I should at length speak as strongly and explicitly as I can, in order to leave a full and clear testimony behind me, whenever it pleases God to call me hence."

One extract from this striking sermon must suffice.

"O ye Methodists, hear the word of the Lord! I have a message from God to all men; but to *you* above all. For above forty years, I have been a servant to you and to your fathers. And I have not been

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1781, p. 522. [2] Ibid. p. 636.
[3] Ibid. 1782, p. 69.

1781, Age 78 as a reed shaken by the wind; I have not varied in my testimony. I have testified to you the very same thing, from the first day even until now. But *who hath believed our report?* I fear not many rich. I fear there is need to apply to some of *you* those terrible words of the apostle: 'Go to now, ye rich men! Weep and howl for the miseries which shall come upon you. Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire.' Certainly it will, unless you both save all you can, and give all you can. But who of you hath considered this, since you first heard the will of the Lord concerning it? Who is now determined to consider and practise it? By the grace of God, begin to day!

"O ye *lovers of money*, hear the word of the Lord! Suppose ye, that money, though multiplied as the sand of the sea, can give you happiness? Then you are *given up to a strong delusion, to believe a lie*—a palpable lie, confuted daily by a thousand experiments. Open your eyes. Look all around you! Are the richest men the happiest? Have those the largest share of content, who have the largest possessions? Is not the very reverse true? Is it not a common observation, that the richest of men are, in general, the most discontented, the most miserable? Had not the far greater part of them more content, when they had less money? Look into your own breasts. If you are increased in goods, are you proportionably increased in happiness? You have more substance; but have you more content? You know the contrary. You know that in seeking happiness from riches, you are only striving to drink out of empty cups. And let them be painted and gilded ever so finely, they are empty still.

Before we recur to Wesley's journal, an unpublished letter may be acceptable.

The preachers now labouring in the Sheffield circuit were James Rogers, Alexander M'Nab, and Samuel Bardsley. Mr. Rogers writes: "One of my fellow labourers did not lovingly draw in the same yoke, and soon after left the connexion. The uneasiness occasioned in the society by his disaffection, for some months, threatened us with disagreeable consequences; and our enemies expected a considerable division among us; but 'He that sitteth above the waterfloods' found means to prevent it. So that instead of losing in our number, we found, at the end of the year, an increase of ninety-seven members."

Of course, this refers to Alexander M'Nab, who had rebelled against Wesley's authority in 1779. Samuel Bardsley was a man of peace, and, moreover, one of the most laborious preachers Wesley had. Besides his pulpit labours, he had rendered great service to the Sheffield society,

by a preaching excursion, undertaken for the purpose of obtaining subscriptions for their chapel. His collecting book is before us, with a list of the collections he made, and the donations he obtained, in a tour extending from Sheffield to York, thence to Hull, and thence, along the east coast, to Newcastle on Tyne. Altogether, he gathered the sum of £89 15*s.* 11*d.*; and, in doing this, made thirty-one public collections, amounting, in the aggregate, to £30 15*s.* 6¾*d.*, and begged the balance of £59 0*s.* 4¼*d.*, of considerably more than three hundred different subscribers, including in this number the inhabitants of not fewer than forty-four towns and villages, whose munificent donations are lumped together. When Bardsley had completed his tour, Wesley wrote him as follows. 1781 Age 78

"NEAR LONDON, *February* 10, 1781.

"DEAR SAMMY,—I did not doubt but you would agree with the people of Sheffield. They are a loving and affectionate people. I am glad you were so successful in your labour of love for them. That assistance was very seasonable.

"That misunderstanding, which was troublesome for a season, may now be buried for ever. I am perfectly well satisfied, both of the honesty and affection, both of brother Woodcroft and brother Birks. So Satan's devices are brought to nought.

"I doubt not but James Rogers and you recommend our books in every place, and the magazines in particular, which will be a testimony for me, when I am no more seen.

"I am, dear Sammy, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

On the 12th of February, Wesley set out on a week's excursion to Norfolk and back again to London, preaching at least ten sermons on the way;[2] and, in wintry weather, travelling more than two hundred miles.

Having spent a few more days in London, he then started, on Sunday, March 4, (as he thought,) for Ireland, but spent a fortnight in the vicinity of Bath and Bristol. Leaving Bristol on March 19, eleven days were occupied in reaching Manchester, during which he preached more than twenty sermons, some of them in the open air.

On March 30, he opened the chapel in Oldham Street,

[1] Original manuscript letter.

[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 8.

1781 Age 78 Manchester. He writes: "Friday, March 30—I opened the new chapel at Manchester, about the size of that in London. The whole congregation behaved with the utmost seriousness. I trust much good will be done in this place. Sunday, April 1—I began reading prayers at ten o'clock. Our country friends flocked in from all sides. At the communion was such a sight as I am persuaded was never seen in Manchester before: eleven or twelve hundred communicants at once; and all of them fearing God."

Thus began the history of a building, which, next to the chapel in City Road, is the most interesting Methodist edifice in existence. First of all, the Manchester Methodists had been located in a miserable room on or near the present site of Bateman's Buildings. Removing thence, in 1750, they worshipped for thirty years in their first chapel, which, up to a recent period, was a warehouse in Birchin Lane.[1] Among the first members, in that old chapel, were: Mary Bromley, for seventy years a Methodist, who died happy in God, at the age of eighty-nine, in 1826:—Mrs. Leech, an upright follower of Christ, who expired in the full assurance of a blessed immortality in 1770:—John Morris, whose autobiography, in the *Arminian Magazine* for 1795, will be found to be full of more than romantic interest:—Mr. Fildes, who, in the same year in which Raikes began his work at Gloucester, opened a Sunday-school in a Manchester cellar, a second in a garret, and a third in the first room in Manchester built expressly for Sunday-school purposes, a room erected at Mr. Fildes' own expense, behind his own dwelling house, in the neighbourhood of London Road:[2]—Adam Oldham, a feltmaker, one of the first trustees of Birchin Lane chapel,[3] who lived in a house on the site which the Albion Hotel now occupies, for many years a useful Methodist,[4] but afterwards a rich backslider, to whom Oldham Street owes its name:—Richard Barlow, who, for sixty-five years, rose at half-past four in summer, and at five in winter:—Mr. Brierley, a member of Peter Kenworthy's class, the leading singer in Oldham Street chapel, and afterwards a magistrate:—John Moseley, a poor hatter in Mill-

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1851, p. 556. [2] Ibid. 1860, p. 379.
[3] Manuscript. [4] *Methodist Magazine*, 1782, p. 331.

gate, the grandfather of Sir Oswald Moseley, from whom Moseley Street derived its name:—and Mrs. Bennett, a relative of John Moseley's, and the first female classleader in Manchester.[1] We wish we had space for details respecting these old Manchester Methodist worthies, who deserve far more honourable record than they have yet received. 1781 Age 78

From Manchester, Wesley went to Bolton, where he writes: "The society here are true, original Methodists. They are not conformed to the world, either in its maxims, its spirit, or its fashions; but are simple followers of the Lamb; consequently they increase both in grace and number."

This was a high compliment to pay to George Escrick and his friends. Their old chapel in New Acres had been converted into cottages; and, in 1776, they had built another in Ridgway Gates, though not without a united and great effort. The Rev. Mr. Fowles, a clergyman, had the management of a sandbed from which they had to obtain their sand; and hearing of their intentions, he announced, that, after the expiration of five days, the sand would be charged half-a-crown a load. This, to the poor Methodists, was a serious matter; but George Escrick was a man of too much energy to be easily defeated. Accordingly, he, at once, requested all the Methodists, young and old, strong and feeble, active and otherwise, to repair with him to the sandpit, and to dig and convey away all the sand they needed. To a man, they obeyed George's injunction, and, in a single day, got as much as their intended chapel was likely to require. Michael Fenwick was then their preacher, and kept running over the half-a-mile distance, between the site of the new chapel, and the clerical sandbed, encouraging the people in their task, and, at one time, wanting to sing the hymn beginning with "Before Jehovah's awful throne"; but blunt George Escrick, the weaver, imperatively stopped his spiritual superior, telling him to take a spade in his hand, for there was a time for all things, and this was a time to dig.

In this old Ridgway Gates chapel, William Grime used to conduct a band meeting every Sunday morning at four o'clock; and, beneath it, Parson Greenwood, one of the

[1] Manuscript.

1781 Age 78 circuit preachers, whose only home was two neighbouring attics, used to keep his victuals.[1] The head of the circuit was Liverpool, and the following were the munificent sums contributed quarterly, by the several societies, in 1776, when the chapel was completed. Liverpool, £5 8*s.* 9*d.*; Bolton, £7 14*s.* 7*d.*; Preston, 11*s.*; Wigan, £1 10*s.*; Meols, 11*s.*; Top of Coal Pits, 17*s.*; Edgeworth, 10*s.* 6*d.*; Moulden Water, 7*s.*; Shackerley, 10*s.*; Aspul Moor, 7*s.*; Chowbent, 10*s.* 6*d.*; Warrington, £1 1*s.*; Northwich, £1 1*s.*; Budworth, 12*s.* 3*d.*; Little Leigh, £1 9*s.* 6*d.*; and Lamberhead Green, 7*s.* 6*d.* Such was Liverpool circuit in 1776; and, out of these Methodist contributions, three Methodist preachers and their families had to be supported. No wonder that the cupboard, beneath the pulpit of the old chapel, was big enough to serve Parson Greenwood for a pantry.

From Bolton, Wesley went to Wigan, and preached a funeral sermon for Betty Brown, one of the first members of Wigan society, "beloved of God, the delight of His children, a dread to wicked men, and a torment to devils."

Leaving Wigan, Wesley proceeded to Chester, and thence to Alpraham, where he did for "good old sister Cawley, a mother in Israel, and a pattern of all good works," what he had done for Betty Brown. Arriving at Warrington, he says: "I put a stop to a bad custom, which was creeping in here: a few men, who had fine voices, sang a psalm which no one knew, in a tune fit for an opera, wherein three, four, or five persons sung different words at the same time! What an insult upon common sense! What a burlesque upon public worship! No custom can excuse such a mixture of profaneness and absurdity."

Desiring to reach Ireland as soon as possible, Wesley embarked at Liverpool, on the 12th of April; but, on getting out to sea, was overtaken with a storm; and, in an hour, was so affected as he had not been for forty years before. For two days, he was unable to swallow anything solid larger than a pea, and was bruised and sore from head to foot, and ill able to turn himself in bed. The sea grew rougher; the horses of Wesley and his companions became turbulent; and

[1] Manuscript.

the hatches were closed. Water, three feet in depth, was in the hold; the ship refused to obey the helm, and was furiously driving on lee shore. Wesley says: "I called our brethren, Floyd, Snowden, and Bradford, to prayers; and we found free access to the throne of grace. Soon after, we got, I know not how, into Holyhead harbour, after being sufficiently buffeted by the winds and waves for two days and two nights. The more I considered, the more I was convinced, it was not the will of God I should go to Ireland at this time. So we went into the stage coach without delay, and the next evening came to Chester." 1781 Age 78

Baffled in his purpose to visit Ireland, Wesley set out on a preaching tour to Whitchurch, Shrewsbury, Brecon, Broseley, Worcester, Brecknock, Carmarthen, Pembroke, Haverfordwest, Tracoon, Newport, Narberth, Llanelly, Swansea, Neath, Bridgend, Cowbridge, Cardiff, and Monmouth. On the 16th of May, he got back to Worcester, having completed the circuit in a month, and preached about thirty times.

He now proceeded to Kidderminster, Salop, Whitchurch, Nantwich, Northwich, and, on May 18, arrived in Manchester, having preached each night and morning.

At Manchester, he writes: "I preached a funeral sermon for Mary Charlton, an Israelite indeed. From the hour that she first knew the pardoning love of God, she never lost sight of it for a moment. Eleven years ago, she believed that God had cleansed her from all sin; and she showed, that she had not believed in vain, by her holy and unblamable conversation."

Molly Charlton was the sweetheart of good old Samuel Bardsley, the only one he ever had. They wished to marry; but the difficulty of providing for married preachers was so great, that Wesley and Pawson interfered, and the nuptial engagement was broken off. In four quarto manuscript volumes, containing Bardsley's diary, and in Pawson's letter concerning this business, and likewise the letter of poor disappointed Molly (all in the writer's possession), there are some racy facts, and traits of personal character, which may be given to the public at some future time.

Leaving Manchester on May 21, Wesley made his way to Warrington, Chowbent, Bolton, Kabb, Blackburn, and Preston.

1781 Age 78 In reference to the last mentioned place, he writes: "May 24—I went on to Preston, where the old prejudice seems to be quite forgotten. The little society has fitted up a large and convenient room, where I preached to a candid audience. Every one seemed to be considerably affected."

Who was the founder of this little society? Twelve years previous to Wesley's visit, John Wood, one of the first Methodists at Padiham, attended Preston sessions, to obtain a licence to preach. Having granted it, one of the magistrates, a clergyman, seeing a number of rude and noisy people outside the sessions house, said to John, perhaps with more sarcasm than sincerity: "There, go and reform that crowd!" John bowed, thanked his worship for his licence, left the court, entered the crowd in full authority, and preached in peace.[1] Six years after this, in 1775, Samuel Bradburn formed the first Methodist class in Preston;[2] and now, in 1781, Martha Thompson, Roger Crane, William Bramwell, of immortal memory, and a few others, had hired an old calendering house, in Lord Street, for a place of meeting, and had fairly begun a work in proud Preston, which, despite the popery of the place, has grown into one of the most prosperous societies in the kingdom.

Wesley next proceeded to the Isle of Man, where he spent eight days, "visited the island round, east, south, north, and west"; preached, at least, a dozen times; and, in a population of thirty thousand, found above two thousand Methodists, with a score of "stout, well looking" local preachers, not surpassed in England. "I was thoroughly convinced," says he, "that we have no such circuit as this, either in England, Scotland, or Ireland. It is shut up from the world; and, having little trade, is visited by scarce any strangers. Here are no papists, no Dissenters of any kind, no Calvinists, no disputers. Here is no opposition, either from the governor, from the bishop, or from the bulk of the clergy. One or two of them did oppose for a time; but they seem now to understand better. So that we have now rather too little than too much reproach. The natives are a plain, artless, simple people; unpolished, that is, unpolluted;

[1] Manuscript. [2] Bradburn's Memoirs, p. 47.

few of them are rich or genteel; the far greater part, moderately poor. The local preachers are men of faith and love, knit together in one mind and one judgment. They speak either Manx or English, and follow a regular plan, which the assistant gives them monthly." 1781 Age 78

On leaving the Isle of Man, Wesley proceeded to Newcastle, preaching, on the way, at Cockermouth, Ballantyne, and Carlisle.

Can it be that this flying evangelist was an old man of nearly eighty? No wonder that he sometimes sang—

> "Oh that without one lingering groan
> I may the welcome word receive,
> My body with my charge lay down,
> And cease at once to work and live!"

Without work, Wesley could not live. The following unpublished letter, written at this period, is strongly characteristic of the man. It was addressed to Samuel Bradburn, at Keighley.

"*June* 16, 1781.

"DEAR SAMMY,—We have no supernumerary preachers, except John Furz, who is so from old age. If John Oliver lives till the conference, and desires it, I suppose he may be upon the same footing. The more exercise he uses, winter or summer, the more health he will have. I can face the north wind at seventy-seven better than I could at seven-and-twenty. But if you *moan over him*, you will kill him outright. A word in your ear. I am but half pleased with Christopher Hopper's proceedings.[1] I do not admire *fair weather preachers*. You must stop local preachers who are loaded with debt. There are few healthier places in England than Keighley. Neither Dublin nor Cork is to compare with it. But have a care! or you will kill Betsy! Do not constrain God to take her away!

"I am, dear Sammy, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Wesley spent eight days at Newcastle, and in its vicinity, and preached, at least, ten or a dozen times. He then visited his societies between there and York. At Thirsk, in a letter to his brother, Wesley wrote:

"THIRSK, *June* 27, 1781.

"DEAR BROTHER,—This is the last day of my seventy-eighth year; and (such is the power of God) I feel as if it were my twenty-eighth. Next Saturday, I expect to be at Epworth; the second, at Boston; the

[1] Then at Colne, in the thirty-fourth year of his itinerancy.

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third, at Sheffield. I take the opportunity of a broken year, to visit those parts of Lincolnshire, which I have not seen before, but once, these twenty years.

"From several, I have lately heard, that God has blessed your preaching. See your calling! 'Cease at once to work and live!' Peace be with all your spirits!

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Two days after this, Wesley arrived at Epworth, and wrote: "I have now preached thrice a day for seven days following; but it is just the same as if it had been but one." Twelve days were spent in Lincolnshire, during which he preached more than a score of sermons. Among other places, Grantham was favoured with his ministry. He writes: "July 9—I preached at Grantham, in the open air, for no house would contain the congregation; and none made the least disturbance."

At the village of Welby, the Rev. W. Dodwell was minister; and in his church, Wesley preached twice on the day before he preached at Grantham. Mr. Dodwell was the pastor of Welby parish for nearly half a century, and died in 1824, when he presented, by deed of gift, £10,000 to the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and an equal sum to the British and Foreign Bible Society.[2] He was present at Wesley's conference of preachers in 1782.[3]

After visiting many other societies in Lincolnshire during the next ten days, Wesley, on July 23, "passed into Yorkshire," and preached at Yeadon, Bradford, Halifax, Greetland, Huddersfield, Longwood House, Mirfield, Daw Green, Birstal, Tadcaster, York, Malton, Scarborough, Beverley, Hull, and Pocklington; and, at the beginning of August, arrived in Leeds, for the purpose of holding his annual conference; but, before giving an account of its proceedings, two letters to two ladies, both written on the same day, will be acceptable. The first was to his niece, Miss Sarah Wesley, then a young lady about twenty—afterwards a personal friend of a large and distinguished literary circle, including Mrs. Hannah More, Miss. Porter, Miss Aikin, Miss Edgeworth, Mrs. Bar-

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 138.
[2] "History of Methodism in Grantham."
[3] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 475.

bauld, and others,—and who died in 1828, at the age of sixty-eight, some of her last words being,—"I have peace, but not joy."[1] 1781 Age 78

"NEAR LEEDS, *July* 17, 1781.

"MY DEAR SALLY,—Without an *endeavour* to please God, and to give up our own will, we never shall attain His favour. But till we have attained it, till we have the Spirit of adoption, we cannot actually give up our own wills to Him. Shall I tell you freely what I judge to be the grand hindrance to your attaining it? Yea, to your attaining more health both of body and mind than you have ever had, or, at least, for a long season? I believe it is, what very few people are aware of, intemperance in sleep. All are intemperate in sleep, who sleep more than nature requires; and how much it does require is easily known. There is, indeed, no universal rule, — none that will suit all constitutions. But, after all the observations and experience I have been able to make for upwards of fifty years, I am fully persuaded that men, in general, need between six and seven hours, sleep in twenty-four; and women, in general, a little more,—namely between seven and eight.

"But what ill consequences are there in lying longer in bed,—suppose nine hours in four-and-twenty?

"1. It hurts the body. Whether you sleep or no, (and, indeed, it commonly prevents sound sleep,) it, as it were, soddens and parboils the flesh, and sows the seeds of numerous disorders; of all nervous diseases in particular, as weakness, faintness, lowness of spirits, nervous headaches, and consequent weakness of sight.

"2. It hurts the mind; it weakens the understanding; it blunts the imagination; it weakens the memory; it dulls all the nobler affections. It takes off the edge of the soul, impairs its vigour and firmness, and infuses a wrong softness, quite inconsistent with the character of a good soldier of Jesus Christ. It grieves the Holy Spirit of God, and prevents, or, at least, lessens, those blessed influences which tend to make you, not almost, but altogether, a Christian.

"I advise you, therefore, from this day forward, not trusting in yourself, but in Him that raiseth the dead, to take exactly so much sleep as nature requires. If you need between seven and eight hours, then, in the name of God, begin this very night, in spite of all temptation to the contrary. Lie down at ten o'clock, and rise between five and six, whether you sleep or no. If your head aches in the day, bear it. In a week you will sleep sound. If you can take this advice, you may receive more from,

"My dear Sally, yours most affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

The other letter was addressed to Miss Bishop, who became a Methodist about the year 1767, and who, from that time,

[1] Jackson's Life of C. Wesley; and *Methodist Magazine*, 1828, p. 719.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1844, p. 288.

1781 Age 78 had been one of Wesley's correspondents. Many of his most spiritual letters were written to this Christian lady, who, though poor, was a gentlewoman. For some years, she had kept a school in Bath or its neighbourhood; but, in 1777, had been seized with spitting of blood, and had been thrown upon the kindness of her friends in Bristol.[1] Recently, however, she had commenced another school at Keynsham, which, said Wesley, "is worthy to be called a Christian school;"[2] though, it would seem, some of the Bristol people wished to make it more fashionable than Wesley liked.

"NEAR LEEDS, *July* 17, 1781.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—If I live to meet the Society in Bristol again, I shall kill or cure the fault of those unwise and unkind parents, who make their children finer than themselves. I shall make their ears tingle. As to you, I advise you, first, to be a Bible Christian yourself, inwardly and outwardly. Be not a hair's breadth more conformable to the fashions of the world than you were when I saw you last. Then, train up your children in the selfsame way. Say to them, with all mildness and firmness, 'Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ.' Whoever is pleased or displeased, keep to this; to *Christian, primitive simplicity*. Perhaps you will at first lose some scholars thereby; but regard it not: God will provide you more. And be assured, nothing shall be wanting that is in the power of,

"My dear sister, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[3]

Two or three other letters may be given here. The first is copied from the original now before us, and, we believe, has not before been published.

"NEAR LEEDS, *July* 25, 1781.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—As long as you give yourself up to God without reserve, you may be assured He will give you His blessing. Indeed, you have already received a thousand blessings; but the greatest of all is yet behind,—Christ in a sinless heart, reigning the Lord of every motion there. It is good for you to hold fast what you have attained, and to be continually aspiring after this. And you will never find more life in your own soul than while you are earnestly exhorting others to go on to perfection. Many will blame you for doing it; but regard not that. Go on, through honour and dishonour. *This one thing I do*, is your motto; I will save my own soul and them that hear me.

"I am, your affectionate brother,

"J. WESLEY."

[1] Manuscript letter by Miss March.
[2] Wesley's Works, vol. iv., p. 207.
[3] *Methodist Magazine*, 1807, p. 471; and Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 36.

Wesley had told his niece, that, if she took his advice with respect to sleep, she might hear from him again. It seems, the advice was adopted; hence the following letter, written seven weeks after the former one. 1781 Age 78

"BRISTOL, *September* 4, 1781.

"MY DEAR SALLY,—It is certain the Author of our nature designed that we should not destroy, but regulate, our desire for knowledge. What course you may take in order to this, I will now briefly point out.

"1. You want to know God, in order to enjoy Him in time and eternity.

"2. All you want to know of Him is contained in one book, the Bible. And all that you learn is to be referred to this, either directly or remotely.

"3. Would it not be well, then, to spend, at least, an hour a day in reading and meditating on the Bible? reading, every morning and evening, a portion of the Old and New Testament, with the Explanatory Notes?

"4. Might you not read two or three hours in the morning, and one or two in the afternoon? When you are tired of severer studies, you may relax your mind by history or poetry.

"5. The first thing you should understand a little of, is grammar. You may read first Kingswood English Grammar, and then Bishop Lowth's Introduction.

"6. You should acquire, if you have not already, some knowledge of arithmetic. Dilworth's Arithmetic would suffice.

"7. For Geography, I think you need only read over Randal's or Guthrie's Geographical Grammar.

"8. Watts' Logic is not a very good one; but I believe you cannot find a better.

"9. In natural philosophy, you have all that you need to know in the 'Survey of the Wisdom of God in Creation.' But you may add the Glasgow abridgment of Mr. Hutchinson's works.

"10. With any, or all, of the foregoing studies, you may intermix that of history. You may begin with Rollin's Ancient History; and afterwards read, in order, the concise History of the Church, Burnet's History of the Reformation, the Concise History of England, Clarendon's History of the Rebellion, Neal's History of the Puritans, his History of New England, and Robertson's History of America.

"11. In metaphysics, you may read Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, and Malebranche's Search after Truth.

"12. For poetry, you may read Spenser's Fairy Queen, and select parts of Shakspeare, Fairfax, or Hoole; Godfrey of Bouillon, Paradise Lost, the Night Thoughts, and Young's Moral and Sacred Poems.

"13. You may begin and end with divinity; in which I will only add, to the books mentioned before, Bishop Pearson on the Creed, and the Christian Library. By this course of study, you may gain all the knowledge which any reasonable Christian needs. But remember, before all,

1781 Age 78 in all, and above all, your great point is, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.

"I am, my dear Sally, your affectionate uncle,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Though Miss Wesley was now in her twenty-first year, and had yet to begin Kingswood English Grammar, still, assuming that henceforward she acted upon the advice of her venerable uncle, it is not surprising, that she ultimately became the well informed woman which her father's biographer says she was. Her brother Charles was three years older than herself; her brother Samuel six years younger. The brothers were musical prodigies; their uncle took a deep interest in their welfare; and wrote to Charles, on August 4, and September 8, 1781, as follows.

"MY DEAR CHARLES,—There is a debt of love, which I should have paid before now; but I must not delay it any longer. I have long observed you with a curious eye; not as a musician, but as an immortal spirit, that is come forth from God the Father of spirits, and is returning to Him in a few moments. But have you well considered this? Methinks, if you had, it would be ever uppermost in your thoughts. For what trifles, in comparison of this, are all the shining baubles in the world! God has favoured you with many advantages. You have health, strength, and a thousand outward blessings. And why should you not have all inward blessings, which God hath purchased for those that love Him? You are good-humoured, mild, and harmless; but, unless you are born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God! You are now, as it were, on the crisis of your fate; just launching into life, and ready to fix your choice, whether you will have God or the world for your happiness. You cannot avoid being very frequently among elegant men and women, that are without God in the world; but, as your *business*, rather than your *choice*, calls you into the fire, I trust that you will not be burnt; seeing He, whom you desire to serve, is able to deliver you, even out of the burning fiery furnace.

"I am, dear Charles, your very affectionate uncle,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Charles Wesley, junior, who had been already introduced to the court of George III., lived to become the organist of George IV., and the musical preceptor of the long lamented Princess Charlotte. He never married; but resided, first with his widowed mother, and then with his sister Sarah,—was a man

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1846, p. 452. [2] Ibid. 1844, p. 562.

of deep devotional feeling, an attendant at Methodist chapels, a lover of Methodist preachers, and died, in 1834, humming Handel's music, and was buried in the same grave as his father and mother in Marylebone churchyard. Poor Samuel was seduced into the popish church before he arrived at the age of twenty; and, thereby, brought the grey hairs of his father with sorrow to the grave. He composed a high mass for the use of the chapel of Pope Pius VI., and received that pontiff's thanks.[1] Like many others, he found it an easy step from popery to infidelity, and wrote: "In this life, my only consolation is in the belief of fatalism, which, although a gloomy asylum, is as bright as I can bear, till convinced of that truth which a launch into the great gulf only can demonstrate." He survived his brother Charles and his sister Sarah; in his last days became a penitent; died in 1837; and was buried in the sepulchre of his parents.[2] 1781 Age 78

The conference of 1781 was a memorable gathering. It was preceded, on Sunday, August 5, by a service in the parish church, at Leeds, such as was probably never witnessed within its walls, either before or since. Wesley preached; eighteen clergymen, inclusive of himself, Coke, and Fletcher, were present; and, at the Lord's supper, there were about eleven hundred communicants, the ordinance being administered by Wesley and ten other ministers.[3]

Connexional affairs created anxiety. Thomas Taylor, in his manuscript diary, remarks: "I feel much concern respecting several things; but how to have them remedied I cannot tell. Many things are exceedingly wrong; but whom to trust to attempt amendment I know not. I sometimes think, the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint."

Wesley writes: "August 6—I desired Mr. Fletcher, Dr. Coke, and four more of our brethren, to meet every evening, that we might consult together on any difficulty that occurred. On August 7, our conference began, at which were present about seventy preachers, whom I had severally invited to come and assist me with their advice, in carrying on the great work of God."

[1] Life of C. Wesley, vol. ii., p. 316. [2] *Wesley Banner*, 1851.
[3] *Methodist Magazine*, 1829, p. 528.

1781 Age 78 The burden of so many preachers being present was found to be greater than the Leeds society could conveniently bear; and it was agreed that every preacher should pay the expenses of his horse keep during the conference sittings. There were more preachers' wives in the connexion than there were houses to lodge them, or money to find them maintenance; and it was resolved, that no more married preachers should be admitted, except in cases of necessity.[1] Some of the preachers had printed, both in verse and prose, without Wesley's consent or correction. Among others, James Kershaw had recently issued a quarto sized book, of 134 pages, entitled, "The Methodist; attempted in Plain Metre." It was thought, that these productions had brought a reproach upon the Methodists, and had hindered the spreading of more profitable books; and it was determined that, in future, no preacher should print anything till it had been corrected by Wesley, and that the profits thereof should go into the common stock. Wesley's Notes on the Old Testament had now been published sixteen years, and yet the edition had not been sold. To get rid of the remaining copies, it was directed that they should be sold at half price.

A number of Methodists at Baildon, in Yorkshire, had written to Wesley, stating that, in accordance with his instructions, they attended the services of their parish church; but their minister preached what they considered to be "dangerously false doctrine," inasmuch as he publicly declared, that men "must not hope to be perfected in love, on this side eternity"; and this had made them doubt whether they

[1] The following letter was written to Duncan Wright, assistant in Yarm circuit, a few months later.

"LONDON, *November* 24, 1781.

"DEAR DUNCAN,—Surely you and I may speak freely to each other; for we love one another. If George Holder goes out, either you must keep his mother, or she must go to the workhouse. You must not give an exhortation to the bands, but encourage them to speak. I would be much obliged to you if you would (1) accept the key of the book room, and immediately take the books into your own care; (2) clip the wings of the local preachers, stewards, and leaders, changing them as need requires; (3) fix bands where they are wanting; (4) if James Logie is willing to remain single, let him travel; (5) do not receive the blind man hastily, let him be thoroughly tried first; (6) be of good courage, and conquer everything. I am, dear Duncan, etc., JOHN WESLEY."—(*Watchman*, Jan. 8, 1868.)

ought to hear him. Wesley laid their letter before the conference, and, as the difficulty applied to many others besides the Methodists at Baildon, he invited a friendly and free discussion. It was unanimously agreed: (1) That it was highly expedient, that all the Methodists, who had been bred therein, should attend the service of the church as often as possible. But that, (2) If the minister began either to preach the absolute decrees, or to rail at, and ridicule Christian perfection, they should quietly go out of the church; yet attend it again the next opportunity." Wesley adds: "I have, since that time, revolved this matter over and over in my mind; and the more I consider it, the more I am convinced, this was the best answer that could be given. Only, I must earnestly caution our friends not to be critical; not to make a man an offender for a word; no, nor for a few sentences, which any who believe the decrees may drop without design."[1] "It is a delicate and important point, on which I cannot lay down any general rule. All I can say, at present, is, if it does not hurt you, hear them; if it does, refrain. Be determined by your own conscience."[2] 1781 Age 78

But this was not all that occurred, on the Church question, at the conference of 1781. One of the principal Methodists, in Leeds, was William Hey, now in the forty-fifth year of his age, a medical man of great repute, an intimate friend and correspondent of Dr. Priestley, and who had been a Methodist for seven-and-twenty years. Mr. Hey intimated to Wesley his desire to address the conference, and to offer some suggestions and advice; declaring, at the same time, that, if his proposals were rejected, he could no longer remain a member of the Methodist society. By Wesley's permission he began to read a paper, to the effect, that Dissenting ideas had been, for many years, gradually growing among the Methodists. In proof of this, he held that the Methodists preached in places already supplied with pious ministers; that meetings in some instances were held in church hours; that the intervals of church service were so filled up with public and private assemblies, that there was no time for suitable refreshment, nor

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1782, p. 153.
[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 232.

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opportunity for instructing families; that many of the largest societies rarely went to church, and some never carried their children there; and that church ministers, who formed societies for private instruction, were looked upon with an envious eye. Such were the complaints which Mr. Hey intended to lay before the conference; but, as he proceeded, the marks of disapprobation were such that Wesley interposed, and said: "As there is much other business before us, brother Hey must defer reading the remainder of his paper to another time."

Brother Hey forthwith left the society; a few months later he was elected alderman; and, more than once, filled the office of chief magistrate in the town of Leeds. Of his ability and piety there can be no question; but Wesley was not prepared to allow him to be the dictator of the Methodists.[1]

No sooner was the conference over than the venerable Wesley again set out on his gospel wanderings. He preached at Sheffield, and then, taking coach with Dr. Coke, travelled day and night till he arrived in London. Two days were spent in the metropolis, and then off he set, on Sunday night, August 19, by coach to Cornwall. We need not follow him. Suffice it to say, that, in eight days, he preached in Cornwall, at least, thirteen sermons, five of them in the open air, and one in Gwennap Pit, to a congregation computed at more than twenty thousand people.

On September 6, he got back to Bristol, in the neighbourhood of which, according to his custom, he spent a month. While here, he wrote the following characteristic letter to Mr. Elijah Bush, a young schoolmaster at Midsomer Norton, who wished to marry a lady to whom his father and mother objected.

"COLEFORD, *September* 11, 1781.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I was much concerned yesterday, when I heard you were likely to marry a woman against the consent of your parents. I have never, in an observation of fifty years, known such a marriage attended with a blessing. I know not how it should be, since it is flatly contrary to the fifth commandment. I told my own mother, pressing me to marry, 'I dare not allow you a positive voice herein; I dare not marry a person because you bid me. But I must allow you a negative voice: I will marry no person if you forbid. I know it would be a sin

[1] Life of Hey.

against God.' Take care what you do. Mr. S. is not a proper judge: he hopes to separate you from the Methodists; and I expect, if you take this step, that will be the end. 1781 Age 78

"I am, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Mr. Bush acted upon Wesley's advice; became the leader of the Midsomer Norton society, and a local preacher; and died a faithful Methodist in 1845.[2]

There are other unhappy marriages besides those contrary to the fifth commandment. Wesley's was one. For thirty years, he paid a fearful penalty for his rash act in 1751; but now his matrimonial misery ended. Leaving Bristol on October 7, and preaching on his way at Devizes, Sarum, Winchester, and in the Isle of Wight, he arrived in London on October 12, and, under the same date, wrote in his journal: "I was informed my wife died on Monday." (October 8.) "This evening she was buried, though I was not informed of it till a day or two after."

Mourning for such a wife would have been hypocrisy. Three days after, on October 15, the widower set out to visit his societies in Oxfordshire. On a similar errand, he went off to Norfolk. On November 5, he began meeting the London classes, and says: "I found a considerable increase in the society. This I impute chiefly to a small company of young persons, who have kept a prayer-meeting at five every morning." He then set out on his tours through Northamptonshire, Huntingdonshire, Bedfordshire, Sussex, and Kent, and concluded the year in London.

The war still raged; English disasters were multiplied; the ministry was tottering, and soon after fell; with which fall the conflict in America concluded. It was at this period, that a rumour gained credence, that the administration intended to propose the embodying of the militia, and their being exercised on Sundays. Wesley was an ardent friend of the ministry of Lord North; and, of course, a staunch defender of the sanctity of the Sabbath. Accordingly, towards the close of 1781, he addressed the following letter to a nobleman, then high in office.

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1848, p. 1055.

[2] Ibid.

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"MY LORD,—If I wrong your lordship, I am sorry for it; but I really believe your lordship fears God: and I hope your lordship has no unfavourable opinion of the Christian revelation. This encourages me to trouble your lordship with a few lines, which otherwise I should not take upon me to do.

"Above thirty years ago, a motion was made in parliament for raising and embodying the militia, and for exercising them, to save time, on Sunday. When the motion was like to pass, an old gentleman stood up and said: 'Mr. Speaker, I have one objection to this: I believe an old book, called the Bible.' The members looked at one another, and the motion was dropped.

"Must not all others, who believe the Bible, have the very same objection? And from what I have seen, I cannot but think, these are still three fourths of the nation. Now, setting religion out of the question, is it expedient to give such a shock to so many millions of people at once? And certainly it would shock them extremely; it would wound them in a very tender part. For would not they, would not all England, would not all Europe, consider this as a virtual repeal of the Bible? And would not all serious persons say, 'We have little religion in the land now; but, by this step, we shall have less still. For wherever this pretty show is to be seen, the people will flock together; and will lounge away so much time before and after it, that the churches will be emptier than they are at present!'

"My lord, I am concerned for this on a double account. First, because I have personal obligations to your lordship, and would fain, even for this reason, recommend your lordship to the love and esteem of all over whom I have any influence. Secondly, because I now reverence your lordship for your office sake, and believe it to be my bounden duty to do all, that is in my little power, to advance your lordship's influence and reputation.

"Will your lordship permit me to add a word in my old fashioned way? I pray Him, that has all power in heaven and earth, to prosper all your endeavours for the public good; and am, my lord, your lordship's willing servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

For some reason, no such bill was introduced into parliament. A few months later, Lord North and his colleagues tendered to the king their resignation, and peace negotiations were commenced.

Before concluding the present year, it only remains to notice Wesley's publications in 1781.

1. "An Extract of a Letter to the Right Honourable Lord

[1] Whitehead's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 400

Viscount H——e, on his Naval Conduct in the American War." 12mo, 27 pages. 1781 Age 78

2. "A Concise Ecclesiastical History, from the Birth of Christ to the Beginning of the present Century. In four volumes." 12mo. The proposals for printing this work by subscription are now before us; from which it appears, that the price of the four volumes, to subscribers, was ten shillings, and that booksellers, subscribing for six copies, should have a seventh gratis. The book, in fact, is Wesley's abridgment of Mosheim, to which is added, "A Short History of the People called Methodists," filling 112 printed pages, and dated "London, November 16, 1781."

3. The *Arminian Magazine.* 8vo, 688 pages. In his preface, Wesley says: "I dare not fill up any publication of mine with bits and scraps, to humour any one living. It is true, I am not fond of verbose writers, neither of very long treatises. I conceive, the size of a book is not always the measure of the writer's understanding. Nay, I believe, if angels were to write books, we should have very few folios. But, neither am I fond of tracts, that begin and end before they have cleared up anything."

Besides six original sermons, the principal article in the magazine of 1781 is Wesley's own translation of Castellio's Dialogues on Predestination. There is a long and interesting account of Kingswood school. Wesley writes:—"I love the very sight of Oxford; but my prejudice in its favour is considerably abated: I do not admire it as I once did; and, whether I did or not, I am now constrained to make a virtue of necessity." He then refers to the expulsion, and exclusion of students, because of their being Methodists; and continues: "I am much obliged to Dr. Nowell and others, for not holding me longer in suspense, but dealing so frankly and openly. And, blessed be God! I can do all the business, which I have in hand, without them. Honour or preferment I do not want, any more than a feather in my cap; and I trust, most of those who are educated at our school are, and will be, of the same mind. As to the knowledge of the tongues, and of arts and sciences, with whatever is termed academical learning, if those who have a tolerable capacity for them do not advance more at Kingswood in three years

1781 Age 78 than the generality of students at Oxford and Cambridge do in seven, I will bear the blame for ever." He then meets the objection, that young men could not have at Kingswood the advantages they would have at the university, from professors, tutors, public exercises, and company. He maintains, that it would be no loss to the universities if all their professorships were abolished. Some of the tutors, he admits, were worthy of all honour, but many were utterly unqualified for the work they had undertaken. As to the public exercises, he himself had never "found them any other than useless interruptions of useful studies." As to company, he writes: "It is most true, that the moment a young man sets his foot either in Oxford or Cambridge, he is surrounded with company of all kinds, except that which will do him good; with loungers and triflers of every sort; with men who no more concern themselves with learning than with religion. Company, therefore, is usually so far from being an advantage to those who enter at either university, that it is the grand nuisance, as well as disgrace, of both; the pit that swallows unwary youths by thousands. I bless God! we have no such *choice of company at Kingswood;* nor ever will, till my head is laid. There is no trifler, no lounger, no drone there; much less any drunkard, sabbath breaker, or common swearer. Whoever accounts this a disadvantage may find a remedy at any college in Oxford or Cambridge."

1782.

AS usual, Wesley spent the first two months of the new year in London. The most notable occurrence, during this period, was the institution of a tract society,—the first that ever was formed. The Religious Tract Society was originated in 1799; Wesley's seventeen years previous to this. We have before us an original document printed in 1783, entitled, "A Plan of the Society, instituted in January, 1782, to distribute Religious Tracts among the Poor." The rules are three. "1. Every member must subscribe half-a-guinea, a guinea, or more, annually. 2. A proportionable quota of tracts shall be delivered yearly to each subscriber, according to his subscription, and, as nearly as possible, at prime cost, and carriage paid. 3. Every subscriber shall have a right to choose his own tracts, if he please; otherwise, he will receive a proportionable variety of the whole." After this follows a list of thirty tracts already printed, all of them either written or published by Wesley. Then there is subjoined the following: "An Extract of the Original Proposals." 1782 Age 79

"I cannot but earnestly recommend this to all those who desire to see true Scriptural Christianity spread throughout these nations. Men wholly unawakened will not take pains to read the Bible. They have no relish for it. But a small tract may engage their attention for half-an-hour; and may, by the blessing of God, prepare them for going forward.

"JOHN WESLEY.

"LONDON, *January* 25, 1782."

Though Wesley's tract society does not now exist, in the form in which it was instituted in 1782, it is a fact worth noting, that, in 1867, Wesley's book room, in City Road, sold not fewer than one million five hundred and seventy thousand tracts, all printed and published by itself;[1] and that the number of its distinct and separate tract publications, in 1871, is not less than 1250.

[1] *Methodist Recorder*, Aug. 16, 1867.

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We have said, the Methodist Tract Society was the first that was ever formed. It is true that, in 1699, "The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge" was founded; and, in 1750, "The Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor"; but, strictly speaking, neither of these was a tract society. In this respect, as in others, Wesley was a pioneer. As early as 1745, he speaks of "giving away some thousands of little tracts among the common people"; and long before 1782, had written, and published, besides a large number of separate and short sermons, at least scores of penny publications. And yet Mr. Jones, the corresponding secretary of the Religious Tract Society, in his jubilee volume of 700 pages, while professing to trace the origin of tract distribution, entirely omits the name of Wesley, who saw the value and the power of a tract more than fifty years before the Religious Tract Society had a name. Was this intentional? We trust not.

On Sunday, the 3rd of March, Wesley took coach for Bristol, where he spent the next fortnight. He then started off on his long northern journey. On his way, he called at Madeley, where "both Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher complained, that, after all the pains they had taken, they could not prevail on the people to join in society, no, nor even to meet in class." What the vicar and his new wife (Miss Bosanquet) failed to do, Wesley accomplished. He preached two rousing sermons; and "then desired those, who were willing to join together for Christian fellowship, to call upon him and Mr. Fletcher after service. Ninety-four persons did so: about as many men as women." Wesley adds: "We explained to them the nature of a Christian society, and they willingly joined therein."

Wesley then proceeded to Congleton, where "the Calvinists were striving to make havoc of the flock"; and to Macclesfield, where he spent Good Friday and Easter Sunday. On the former day, he preached twice, in the Rev. David Simpson's church; and, with his assistance, administered the sacrament to about thirteen hundred persons; on the latter day, he also preached twice in the same edifice; again administered to eight hundred communicants; and, in the evening, preached in the Methodist chapel, and held a love-feast at which sixteen or eighteen persons professed to live in

the enjoyment of the blessing of perfect love. "About forty," says Hester Ann Rogers, in the unpublished portion of her diary, "made a noble confession." Among these were herself, George Bradock, Joseph Roe, John Booby, T. Ridgway, Joseph Norberry, Billy Sharpley, S. Bradshaw, and John Goostry; the last of whom Wesley ordered to stand on the form, that the people might hear him. "Mr. Wesley," continues Mrs. Rogers, "kept the lovefeast two hours, a thing which I never knew him do before; but his soul was filled with thankfulness, for so many witnesses of redeeming love and full salvation." 1782 Age 79

It would be tedious to mention all the places Wesley visited. Suffice it to say, that, at Ashton under Lyne, he preached in the new chapel, which had the following inscription over the door: "Can any good come out of Nazareth? Come and see!" At Oldham, "a whole troop of boys and girls would not be contented till he shook each by the hand." At St. Helen's, he preached in the house of Joseph Harris, who had removed from Kingswood, "to take care of the copper works." At Wigan, he "saw an uncommon sight,—the preaching house filled, yea, crowded." At Epworth, there had been a marvellous revival. At Thorne, fifty had found peace with God within two months. At Edinburgh, he was the guest of Lady Maxwell, and visited her school of forty poor children, many of whom were without shoes; but not a girl, in rags, was without her ruffles. At Kelso, he fell, head foremost, down the stairs of Dr. Douglas's house, but mercifully escaped without serious injury.[1] At York, he entered into his eightieth year, and wrote: "Blessed be God! my time is not labour and sorrow. I find no more pain or bodily infirmities than at five-and-twenty. This I still impute—(1) To the power of God, fitting me for what He calls me to. (2) To my still travelling four or five thousand miles a year. (3) To my sleeping, night or day, whenever I want

[1] It was doubtless at this time that he had a youthful hearer, who afterwards became the renowned Sir Walter Scott. In a letter to Southey, dated Abbotsford, April 4, 1819, Scott writes: "When I was about twelve years old, I heard Wesley preach more than once, standing on a chair, in Kelso churchyard. He was a most venerable figure, but his sermons were vastly too colloquial for the taste of Saunders. He told

1782 Age 79 it. (4) To my rising at a set hour. (5) To my constant preaching, particularly in the morning."

Wesley reached London, after an absence of more than four months, on July 20. Here he held his conference. He writes: "Friday, August 2, we observed as a day of fasting and prayer for a blessing on the ensuing conference; and I believe God clothed His word with power in an uncommon manner throughout the week; so that, were it only on this account, the preachers who came from all parts found their labour was not in vain."

Among other questions debated at this conference, was the sabbath. Methodists, in some instances, visited barbers' shops on Sundays; and, in others, practised military exercises, as volunteers, or were spectators of such exercises. This led the conference to enact, that no members of society should have their hair dressed on Sundays; and that, as far as possible, those barbers should be patronised who observed the sabbath's sanctity. It was further determined, that any Methodist, who practised military exercises on the sabbath, as a volunteer, should be expelled; and that any one who, after proper admonition, continued a spectator of such sabbath drills should undergo the same penalty. Though not absolutely forbidden, preachers were recommended not to powder their hair, nor to wear artificial curls. The weekly and quarterly contributions having been shamefully neglected in many of the societies, the assistants and leaders were to remind the people of the original rule, that "every member contributes one penny weekly, (unless he is in extreme poverty,) and one shilling quarterly." Wesley adds: "*Money lovers* are the pest of every Christian society. They have been the main cause of destroying every revival of religion. They will destroy *us*, if we do not put them away. A man

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many excellent stories. One I remember, which he said had happened to him at Edinburgh. 'A drunken dragoon,' said Wesley, 'was commencing an assertion in military fashion, G——d eternally d——n me, just as I was passing. I touched the poor man on the shoulder, and when he turned round fiercely, said calmly, You mean, *God bless you.*' In the mode of telling the story, he failed not to make us sensible how much this patriarchal appearance, and mild yet bold rebuke, overawed the soldier, who touched his hat, thanked him, and, I think, came to chapel that evening."—("Memoirs of Sir Walter Scott," by J. G. Lockhart, Esq.)

not worth a shilling enters our society. Yet he freely gives a penny a week. Five years after, he is worth scores of pounds; he gives a penny a week still. I must think this man covetous, unless he assures me he bestows his charity some other way. For every one is covetous, whose beneficence does not increase in the same proportion as his substance." 1782 Age 79

The most troublesome subject of discussion was the case of the Birstal chapel. It was asked, "What can be done with regard to the preaching house at Birstal?" Answer. "If the trustees still refuse to settle it on the Methodist plan: 1. Let a plain statement of the case be drawn up. 2. Let a collection be made throughout all England, in order to purchase ground, and to build another preaching house as near the present as may be."

This was an important matter, on account of its involving one of Methodism's fundamental principles, namely, that the conference *alone* shall have the power of appointing preachers to preach in Methodist chapels. This was the first time that the question was fairly raised. It was seen, that the issue, either way, would be most momentous. It affected not Birstal merely, but the whole Methodist connexion; and not the present only, but the future. Great excitement was created. The controversy, among other great results, led to the drawing up and enrolment of Methodism's Magna Charta, Wesley's deed of declaration, in 1784. Altogether, this was one of the most important events in Wesley's history; and, hence, a detailed account of it will not be inappropriate.

The original chapel at Birstal was erected, under the auspices of John Nelson, about the year 1751. By the deed of settlement, the right of occupying the pulpit was given, first, to the two Wesleys in succession, and then to Grimshaw of Haworth; but, after the decease of these three ministers, the trustees were to elect their own preachers monthly; and all such preachers, so long as they continued in this office, were to preach in the chapel twice every Sunday, every Christmas day, New Year's day, and Good Friday, and also every Thursday night, as had been, up to 1751, "usual and customary to be done."

Such was the substance of the obnoxious clause; which hitherto, however, had created no difficulty.

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In 1782, it was found necessary, either to enlarge the old chapel, or to build a new one in its place. Contributions were given for this purpose; but were not sufficient. It was ascertained, that the sum of £350 additional would be required, and that eight of the intended trustees would have to advance the money. To give them security, a deed of transfer was prepared, in which John and Charles Wesley, for the considerations therein mentioned, sold to certain specified trustees the old premises, with the following agreements in reference to the enlarged, or the new chapel, which was to be provided to meet the growing necessities of the Birstal Methodists. 1. The trustees advancing the £350 were to have, as their security, "the rents and profits to arise from the hearers' pews and seats." 2. The new or enlarged chapel was to be occupied, during their lifetime, by John and Charles Wesley, or by those whom they might from time to time appoint. 3. After their death, the appointment of preachers, to preach in the said chapel, was to be made by the trustees, and by "such members of the Methodist society as had been classleaders for three years, within the circumjacent villages of Birstal, Great Gomersal, Little Gomersal, Birkenshaw, Adwalton, Drighlington, Batley, Carlinghow, and Heckmondwike; or by the major part of such trustees and classleaders." Provided always, that the said preachers preach no other doctrine than is contained in Mr. Wesley's Notes upon the Old and New Testament; that they preach in the said chapel twice every Sunday, and at least one evening every week; and that they hold the said premises and exercise the function of a preacher only during the goodwill and pleasure of the major part of the aforesaid trustees and classleaders. After this, followed a number of provisoes in reference to pew rents, etc. (1) The rents were to be applied in keeping the premises in repair. (2) In paying interest upon the debt of £350, at 5 per cent. per annum. (3) In maintaining the preacher for the time being, for which purpose, however, not more than £10 a year should be appropriated, until after the whole of the £350 had been repaid; when, after deducting for repairs and lasting improvements, the whole of the clear rents and profits arising from the pews and seats should be given "for and towards the maintenance and sup-

port of the preachers or pastors for the time being of the said society at Birstal." It was further provided, that the appointment and removal of chapel stewards should be vested in the preachers, trustees, and classleaders aforesaid, or the major part of them, notice of their meetings for such purpose, however, having to be publicly read to the congregation on three successive Sunday evenings immediately preceding. Certain rooms also in a dwelling house, on the premises, were to be at the use of the stewards and leaders, for the purpose of transacting business and meeting classes. 1782 Age 79

The above is an abstract of all the important points in the new trust deed of 1782. That deed had attached to it the following signatures.

John Aspinall,	William Booth,
Joseph Bennett,	John Wesley,
James Blackburn,	Joseph Charlesworth,
John Tempest,	Charles Gunson,
Jonathan Brearley,	John Armitage,
Benjamin Mallinson,	Joseph Lee,
Anthony Williamson,	Thomas Crowther,
Nathaniel Harrison,	William Tempest,
John White,	Isaac Smith,
Joseph Nelson,	William Chadwick.

Wesley's signature was witnessed by Thomas Briscoe and Alexander Mather. The deed was dated May 14, 1782, and was enrolled on the 11th of October following. It may be added, that, of the above signers, Aspinall, Bennett, Blackburn, Tempest, Brierley, Williamson, Harrison, White, Nelson, and Booth were old trustees; Mallinson, Charlesworth, Gunson, Armitage, Lee, Crowther, W. Tempest, Smith, and Chadwick were the new trustees.

The deed of 1782 was widely different from that of 1751, and, as the vice chancellor ruled in 1854, so far as it purported to vary the trusts of the latter deed, it was void and of no effect;[1] but it still contained the obnoxious clause, giving power to other parties than Wesley's conference, to appoint the preachers. Wesley says, in a letter to his brother, dated May 23, 1782:

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1854, p. 184.

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"The trustees brought to me the deed, at Daw Green, which they read over, and desired me to sign. We disputed upon it about an hour. I then gave them a positive answer, that I would not sign it; and, leaving them abruptly, went up into my room. At night, a little before I went to bed, they came again, got round and worried me down. But, I think, they cannot worry you. May you not very properly write to Mr. Valton? 'If the trustees will settle the Birstal house on the Methodist plan, I will sign their deed with all my heart; but, if they build a house for a presbyterian meeting-house, I will not, dare not, have anything to do with it.'"[1]

Wesley committed a mistake; but, be it borne in mind, that he was now an old man of nearly eighty, and that Alexander Mather, and Thomas Briscoe, the superintendents of the Leeds and Birstal circuits, were participators in his folly.

In an unpublished letter to Samuel Bradburn, then stationed at Bradford, Wesley wrote:

"LONDON, *November* 9, 1782.

"DEAR SAMMY,—I abhor the thought of giving to twenty men the power to place or displace the preacher in their congregations. How would he then dare to speak an unpleasing truth? And, if he did, what would become of him? This must never be the case, while I live, among the Methodists. And Birstal is a leading case, the first of an avowed violation of our plan. Therefore, the point must be carried for the Methodist preachers now or never; and I alone can carry it, which I will, God being my helper. You are not a match for the silver tongue, nor brother Hopper. But do not, to please any of your new friends, forsake

"Your true old friend,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Charles Wesley acted upon his brother's advice. He entered into correspondence with the Birstal reformers. In answer to their objection, that "the present trustees *could not* legally transfer any of their power *to the conference*," he asks: "Then how can they transfer any of their power to the leaders?" He continues:

"You add,—'As long as the conference appoints preachers with candid impartiality, we doubt not their appointments will be acquiesced in by the trustees and classleaders.' But, according to this deed, the conference has no more business than the parliament to appoint preachers at all. To touch on one more point. From the beginning of Methodism till now, the assistants appointed the stewards in all societies; but this deed gives the

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 138.

trustees and leaders this power; which they think is '*necessary* to ensure the repayment of the £350 to be advanced for the building.' *Necessary!* Not at all. How many thousand pounds, advanced for buildings, have been paid within these forty years, though all the stewards in England, Scotland, and Ireland, have been hitherto appointed by my brother or the assistants! You conclude your letter with a very just observation: 'the civil and religious rights of mankind have seldom been promoted by the assemblies of ecclesiastics of any denomination; and they never will be, unless they are composed of men devoted to God, and dead to all the allurements of ease, and avarice, and ambition.' This is undoubtedly true; and this, we humbly hope, is the real character of most (at least) of those persons that meet in our assemblies. We hope, likewise, that 'their consultations will always be moderated by some wise and truly religious man'; otherwise, that God will sweep away the very name of Methodist from the earth. Upon the whole, I cannot, I dare not sign that deed. I can have nothing to do with it. If the house should, nevertheless, be built, and settled upon that plan, I apprehend the consequence would be this: 1. No Methodist preacher would ever preach in it. If any did, the whole body would disclaim him. 2. My brother would immediately set a subscription on foot for buying ground and building another house. The trustees then might do what they pleased with theirs."[1] 1782 Age 79

This letter was written a week before the conference of 1782 was opened; and was a reply to one written by James Carr, the trustees' attorney, who, soon afterwards, addressed the following unpublished letter to Mr. Charlesworth.

"MY GOOD FRIEND,—Having an insuperable aversion to *recite* my own simple performances, I here enclose a correct copy of my letter to Mr. Charles Wesley.

"I know, that you and the other framers of the present trust deed, were actuated by the *purest*, most *equitable*, and *disinterested* motives; and, therefore, in my address to Mr. Wesley, I held myself bound, by every tie of justice, to explain and enforce the *grounds* and *reasons* of your conduct, with all the energy in my power. I hope, I have no immodest opinion of my poor abilities, when I assert, that the *reasons*, by me alleged, for modifying the deed, in the manner described, cannot be fairly answered or refuted, by Mr. Mather, or Mr. C. Wesley. Ingenuity may perplex, wit may ridicule, sophistry may misinterpret, or prejudice may dislike a deed framed contrary to *received systems* or *opinions*. But when it is calmly considered, that the poor, beneficent founders of the preaching house had an undoubted right to settle it in what manner they thought meet; that it would be *impious*, as well as *illegal*, to abrogate their constitution; that you could only modify and improve it in a way consistent with their manifest intention; that the honour of religion re-

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 140.

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quired you to make a legal and effectual provision for payment of a just debt;—when these things, I say, are calmly considered, candour must admit, every preacher of righteousness must acknowledge, that the present trust deed is modelled with that rectitude and propriety, which become Christian men.

"As nothing can discourage me when I am engaged in a righteous cause, I mean to write again to Mr. Charles Wesley; and, therefore, if I have omitted, in my former address, any topics or arguments which occur to you or friends, I wish you would specify them in *writing;* though I shall certainly now speak to him more in a *professional* style than in a religious one.

"Yours most sincerely,

"JAMES CARR."

In the mean time, the new chapel was built, and Dr. Coke took up the matter. The following also is a letter now for the first time published. It was addressed to Mr. Charlesworth,

"BRISTOL, *October* 18, 1782.

"SIR,—There is but one argument, which you have used, which appears to me to have any force in it against the many uncontrovertible arguments, which I have urged on the other side. It is this: is it not unjust, that the persons who have advanced money on the building, which has been lately erected, should lose that money, when they advanced it upon the word of Mr. Wesley, and would not have advanced it on any other ground? In answer to this, I observe, that, as I am in this business the servant of the conference, and have invested in me a discretionary power to act as I see occasion, I will, therefore, remove this objection as far as justice, equity, and my trust, will admit me to go. For this purpose, I promise and engage, that the interest of the money, which has been lent on the lately erected building, shall be regularly paid, either out of the profits of that building, or out of the profits of the building which is to be erected, or out of the profits of both of them together, so long as the two Messrs. Wesley live; and, after their decease, as long as the lately erected building is at the disposal of the Methodist conference, and no longer. Provided, that either of the chapels, or both of them together, produce an income sufficient to pay the aforesaid interest, after paying for the necessary repairs, and the £10 paid to the support of the preachers, be deducted. Provided, also, that the debt *itself*, which has been already incurred, remain upon the lately erected edifice, and upon that alone,—I promise and engage that the aforesaid interest shall be paid to the creditors annually in preference to every other payment, except the said necessary repairs, and £10 towards the support of the preachers.

"I am, sir, your humble servant in the gospel,

"THOMAS COKE."

Shortly after, Dr. Coke published a 12mo tract of 12 pages,

entitled, "An Address to the inhabitants of Birstal, and the adjacent villages." He relates how the attorney of the trustees obtained Wesley's signature to the deed. He states, that Charles Wesley had not signed, and, he believed, never would. The "*amazing deed*" had been discussed at the late conference, and had created just alarm; and he (Dr. Coke) had been delegated to carry into execution the minute that was passed; but, upon application to the trustees, he had "found the greatest part of them determined to hold fast their unlimited and most dangerous power." He answers the objection, "Would it not be equally dangerous to invest this power in the conference?" by saying, "No: for the plan of settlement, adopted by the conference, ties them down to the principles of religion at present held by the Methodists." He relates, that he had proposed to the trustees to submit the matter to the arbitration of the attorney general, or some other eminent counsellor; and had engaged that, if the opinion thus obtained was the same as that of the trustees and Mr. Carr, "Birstal preaching house should be considered an exempt case, and the trustees should be suffered quietly to retain all the power which they had at present"; with the understanding, on the other hand, that, if the legal opinion of the arbitrator was, "that the surviving trustees, with the consent of the original proprietor, and all the parties concerned, could resettle the house on the Methodist plan, they would resettle it accordingly." He had also added, at another meeting, that, in such a case, he would give a bond of five or six hundred pounds, that the trustees, who had advanced the £350, should not only have their interest, but their *principal*, paid them, in instalments of £50 per annum; and, further, that he would engage, that all subscribers to the recently erected building, "who signified their desire of having their money returned, should have it returned to them within two years." The trustees, however, "obstinately refused to comply with this." 1782 Age 79

Coke continues:

"Afterwards, another plan, of reconciliation was proposed, by one of themselves, to which we all consented, namely, that all the trustees should bind themselves by a deed, that if they, or the major part of them, should agree, after the demise of the Messrs. Wesley, to choose an independent

1782 — Age 79. teacher, they should be obliged to signify this their intention, by three years' notice to the conference, or to the moderator of the conference for the time being; with a provision, that, if the preachers were ever to desist from meeting in regular conference, as they did at present, or to deviate from the grand Methodist plan on which they at present act, then the full power should immediately devolve upon the trustees, and they might, without any previous notice whatever, choose an independent teacher."

Such was the unanimous agreement. A rough draft of the intended deed was made, and (*horresco referens!*) was brought, by the attorney of the trustees, to Dr. Coke on the *Sunday* following. On reading it, Coke found a few words inserted, which upset the whole. It read: "If the said trustees and leaders, or the major part of them, shall at any time, *in their judgment, think* that the said conference deviates from the grand Methodist plan, then," etc., "thus constituting themselves judges in their own cause." Dr. Coke objected to this; and they seemed willing to give it up; but "desired that another meeting might be held on the following Sunday! at which all the leaders might be present, that their consent might also be procured." The conference representative agreed to this; Sunday came; and the trustees and leaders "would not move a single step."

Such had been the negotiations, and such was the state of affairs, when Dr. Coke published his pamphlet in November, 1782. He makes an appeal "to the congregation, and to the society," and concludes with the following prayer: "O Thou Lover of concord and Prince of peace, keep these little ones under Thy fostering wing. Preserve them from the silken tongued sycophant, the sly deceiver, who seeks his own, and not the things of Jesus Christ. Hide them for a little moment in the chambers of Thy love, till this and every indignation be overpast. Keep them close to the bleeding side of Jesus, and close to the affectionate hearts of their faithful pastors for ever."

What more was done? Two months after this, on January 3, 1783, Wesley issued a folio circular, entitled, "The Case of the Birstal House."[1] This all can read for themselves in

[1] The copy before us is addressed "To Mr. Thompson, at the Methodist chapel, Hull," and is signed by Wesley in his own handwriting.

Wesley's collected works (vol. xiii., p. 260). Suffice it to say, that the reasons assigned by Wesley, why neither the Birstal, nor any other Methodist chapel, should be settled according to the Birstal deed, were: (1) It would put an end to itinerant preaching, for when the trustees got a preacher whom they liked, they would keep him. (2) It would put a bridle in the preacher's mouth; for how would he dare to speak the full and the whole truth, when he was liable to lose his bread? (3) "The power of the trustees was greater than that of any nobleman; yea, or of the king himself. Where he is patron, he can *put in* a preacher, but he cannot *put him out.*" He concludes: "No Methodist trustees, if I can help it, shall, after my death, any more than while I live, have the power of *placing* and *displacing* the preachers." 1782 Age 79

So the thing went on. A case was submitted to Mr. John Maddocks, barrister, for his opinion, as to the possibility of legally making such an alteration in trust deeds, as was desired in the Birstal case. His opinion, dated "Lincoln's Inn, July 24, 1783," is before us, and is to the effect, that such an alteration might be made. On the 5th of September following, Wesley met the nineteen trustees, and offered to allow the same clause to be inserted in a new deed as was inserted in the deed of the chapel in City Road, namely, "In case the doctrine or practice of any preacher should, in the opinion of the major part of the trustees, be not conformable to Mr. Wesley's Sermons and Notes on the New Testament, on representing this, another preacher shall be sent within three months." Five of the trustees were willing to accept of this; the rest refused.

In an unpublished letter, written by Dr. Coke, and addressed to Mr. Benson, only ten days after this interview, there are some other particulars given. Wesley first told the trustees, he wished their chapel to be settled according to the Methodist plan contained in the minutes of conference. He then offered to allow the clause to be inserted which has just been mentioned; adding, "this was never allowed to any trustees before, and never shall again while I live." He further offered to relieve the trustees of their £350 debt, promising to give £100 himself, and saying, "This I do, because I love you, and for old acquaintance sake." And he further promised to

1782 Age 79 make them a present of the piece of ground which Dr. Coke had purchased for the site of another chapel. The names of the five consenting trustees were, Nathaniel Harrison, Anthony Williamson, John Aspinall, Joseph Bennett, and James Blackburn.[1]

The dissentient trustees took time to think. On September 25, 1783, Christopher Hopper wrote to one of them, Mr. Charlesworth, in a somewhat ambiguous style, as follows.

"MY VERY DEAR JOSEPH,—It gives me pleasure to hear that you were so well satisfied with Mr. Wesley's temper and conduct; and I am glad to hear you behaved so well. Solemn conference! Great expectations! Grand overture! But alas! no decision! Mortifying indeed! I still wish we never had given you any trouble, but patiently waited the event. But, if you are determined to stand your ground after this meeting, I cannot tell what the consequence will be. Great grace be on you all!

"C. HOPPER."[2]

Reflection often brings wisdom. On the 13th of January, 1784, Mr. Charlesworth wrote to Wesley, saying, that his offer would now be accepted. He says, with a Yorkshire keenness, which smacks of avarice—

"We cannot but acknowledge your goodness in promising the land, and the money towards paying our debt, which will be two very convenient articles at this place, as we are in great want of both.

"I am, reverend and dear sir, for and on behalf of the trustees,

"Yours very affectionately,

"JOSEPH CHARLESWORTH."[3]

The result was, a new deed was made, giving the conference power to appoint preachers; and this serious hubbub, *pro tem.*, subsided. We shall soon have to recur to the same subject; and this apparently long and tedious digression may serve as an introduction to what will have to be said hereafter. The controversy was the first battle fought for restricting, or rather for setting aside, an ecclesiastical power, which has grown to be the greatest exercised by any church throughout the whole of the Christian world; and perhaps, on this ground, the writer will be pardoned for trespassing on the reader's

[1] Coke's manuscript letter.
[2] Manuscript letter. [3] Ibid.

patience; and especially as many of the incidents are now for the first time published.[1] 1782 Age 79

We return to Wesley. Of course, the dispute at Birstal led to much unpleasantness; but Wesley was firm in maintaining discipline. Hence the following, addressed to Mr. Valton, then one of the Birstal preachers.

"*June* 18, 1782.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I cannot allow J—— S—— to be any longer a leader; and, if he will lead the class, whether I will or no, I require you to put him out of our society. If twenty of his class will leave the society too, they must. The first loss is the best. Better forty members should be lost, than our discipline be lost. *They are no Methodists, that will bear no restraints.* Explain this at large to the society.

"I am, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Wesley's clerical friends were now regularly and constantly increasing. He had, to some extent, outlived their *brotherly* persecution. They began to appreciate his motives and his services; and, so far from hooting and hissing him, began to greet him, to court his company, and to ask his counsel. Among others of this description may be mentioned the Rev. Thomas Davenport, who was now in his sixtieth year, but had only recently found peace with God, and that principally through Wesley's help.[3] Wesley wrote to him as follows.

"BRISTOL, *August* 14, 1782.

"DEAR SIR,—It would have given me a good deal of satisfaction to have had a little conversation with you. But I do not stay long in one place. I have no resting place on earth:

'A poor wayfaring man,
I dwell in tents below,
Or gladly wander to and fro,
Till I my Canaan gain.'

"You would have been very welcome at our conference. Mr. Pugh and Mr. Dodwell[4] were present at it; and, I believe, are more determined than ever to spend their whole strength in saving their own souls, and them that hear them.

"I believe, that one of our preachers, who are stationed in the Leicester circuit, will call upon you at Alexton; and I make no doubt but some of

[1] For the manuscripts that have been used, I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Clapham, of Birstal.

[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1824, p. 307.

[3] Ibid. 1790, pp. 106, 163.

[4] Both clergymen.

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the seed which you have long been sowing will then grow up. No one should wish or pray for persecution. On the contrary, we are to avoid it, to the uttermost of our power. 'When they persecute you in one city, flee unto another.' Yet, when it does come, notwithstanding all our care to avoid it, God will extract good out of evil.

"To-morrow I am to set out for Cornwall. In about three weeks, I expect to be here again. In the beginning of October, I generally move towards London; in the neighbourhood of which I usually spend the winter.

"I am, dear sir, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

The day after this letter was written, Wesley set out westwards. On reaching Exeter, where his old antagonist, Bishop Lavington, once resided, he met with a most friendly welcome; and, by invitation, dined on the Sunday, with the bishop, in his palace, five other clergymen and four of the aldermen of Exeter being present besides himself. Arriving at Plymouth, Wesley preached in the Square, and, while doing so, a regiment of soldiers, with military music, marched into it. No sooner, however, did the commanding officer perceive the preacher, than he stopped the music, and drew up his men to listen. "They were all still as night;" says Wesley, "nor did any of them stir, till I had pronounced the blessing."

In Cornwall, he found an old clerical friend at the point of death, the Rev. Mr. Thompson, rector of St. Gennis. It was now thirty-seven years since Wesley first preached in Mr. Thompson's church, and, throughout the whole of that period, they had been faithful friends. The dying rector wished once more to see his old acquaintance. Wesley, borrowing the best horse he could find, and riding as fast as he was able, says: "I found Mr. Thompson just alive, but quite sensible. He had many doubts concerning his final state, and rather feared, than desired, to die; so that my whole business was to comfort him, and to increase and confirm his confidence in God. He desired me to administer the Lord's supper, which I willingly did; and I left him much happier than I found him, calmly waiting till his change should come."

While riding to see his friend, Mr. Thompson, Wesley

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 475.

was accosted by an old acquaintance of another sort. He writes: "On the way, I met with a white headed old man, who caught me by the hand, and said, 'Sir, do you not know me?' I answered, 'No.' He said, 'My father, my father! I am poor John Trembath.' I desired him to speak to me in the evening at Launceston; which he did. He was, for some time, reduced to extreme poverty, so as to hedge and ditch for bread; but, in his distress, he cried unto God, who sent him an answer of peace. He, likewise, enabled him to cure a gentleman that was desperately ill, and afterwards several others; so that he grew into reputation, and gained a competent livelihood. 'And now,' said he, 'I want for nothing: I am happier than ever I was in my life.'" 1782 Age 71

Who was John Trembath? One of Wesley's first itinerants, who commenced his ministry in 1743, and, for several years, laboured with diligence under Wesley's direction,[1]—a man of great eloquence and zeal,[2]—a burning and shining light, and a workman who, at one time, according to Wesley, had no need to be ashamed,[3]—a preacher not deep, and yet so popular as to be almost idolised by the people;[4] but who, alas! for the last twenty years, had sunk into an extreme of sin, and shame, and misery. Naturally vain, the applauses of the people spoiled him. He became bouncing, and boastful, and not always truthful. He married, gave up reading, turned to farming, and kept company with men who had just wit enough to "talk of bullocks," and to "smoke, drink, and flatter him." He became a sportsman, and was suspected of smuggling.[5] His career was almost a romance. But now, to use Wesley's language, "John Trembath was alive again."[6] A month after the strange interview above related, Trembath wrote to Wesley: "Though God has forgiven me, yet I cannot forgive myself for the precious time I have wasted, the years I have lost, and the glorious harvest I have neglected."[7] Poor Trembath died of paralysis, at Cork, about the year 1793.[8]

[1] Myles's History.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1826, p. 794.
[3] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 309.
[4] *Methodist Magazine*, 1782, p. 468.
[5] Ibid. 1798, p. 492; and 1780, p. 448.
[6] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 13.
[7] *Methodist Magazine*, 1790, p. 557.
Everett's "Methodism in Sheffield."

1782 Age 79 Such were the old friends whom Wesley met in Cornwall. Getting back to Bristol, on September 6, he found a new one, young, but warm hearted, honest, and faithful. Adam Clarke, just emerging out of his teens, had arrived from Ireland. He had travelled from Birmingham to Bristol upon a penny loaf and a halfpennyworth of apples; and had just three halfpence left when he got to Kingswood school. He met with a reception from Simpson, the head master, as frigid as cold heartedness could make it. Simpson's stupid, imperious wife made bad things worse, by suspecting that the young Irishman might be afflicted with the itch, and by making him rub himself from head to foot with Jackson's ointment. This "infernal unguent," as Adam calls it, made him smell worse than a polecat. His only sustenance was bread and milk; and not enough of that. For more than three weeks, no one performed any kind act for him. As for Mrs. Simpson, he feared her as he feared the devil. At length, Wesley arrived from Cornwall; Clarke was introduced; Wesley laid his hands upon his head, and spent a few minutes in beseeching God to bless him; and then gave him his commission to proceed to Wiltshire as a Methodist preacher. Fifty years after this, Adam Clarke died in London,—an old itinerant preacher, without a spot on the fair escutcheon of his character,—one of the most extensively learned scholars of the age,—a voluminous author,—the friend of philosophers and princes,—and a man intensely beloved by nearly all who knew him.

Wesley left Bristol for London on October 7, and, on his way, preached at Newport in the Isle of Wight. He writes: "This place seems now ripe for the gospel, opposition is at an end."

At Newport the first Methodist preaching place was a room in Node Hill; and the opposition, referred to by Wesley, consisted of the beating of drums, tin kettles, and bells; the throwing of rotten eggs, sticks, and stones; sparrows let loose in the room for the purpose of putting out the lights; and covering the chimney top and fastening the door, in order to stifle the imprisoned worshippers. It was at Newport, that Robert Wallbridge heard Wesley preach; was converted; became a Methodist; and a Methodist local preacher. Elizabeth Wallbridge, his sister, was now a light haired, ruddy

faced, and merry hearted girl, of twelve years old. Of scholastic learning she had but a slender share; and, had to earn her bread as a household servant. She had a high flow of spirits, vanity, and ready wit, and was inordinately fond of dress. Elizabeth was converted under the ministry of James Crabb, a Methodist preacher, became a Methodist herself, and continued such to the end of life. Her father joined the church presided over by the Rev. Daniel Tyerman, who published an account of him, in a well written tract, a short time before he set sail on his mission to the South Sea islands. Elizabeth's brother Robert, for more than forty years, was a Methodist local preacher, and died at Newport in 1837. Elizabeth herself died, at the age of thirty-one, in the year 1801; the Rev. Legh Richmond visited her in her last moments; and afterwards wrote her life, with the title of "The Dairyman's Daughter," omitting to state, however, that his heroine was a Methodist. Millions of copies of that publication have been circulated; it has been translated into, at least, thirty languages; and, thirty years ago, it had been the means of the conversion of three hundred and fifty persons.[1] 1782 Age 79

Wesley reached London on October 11. Here, and in eight or nine of the southern counties of England, he spent, according to his custom, the remainder of the year.

His publications, in 1782, were few in number.

1. An Extract from his Journal, from January 1, 1776, to August 5, 1779. 12mo, 112 pages.

2. "Alleine's Alarm to the Unconverted." 12mo, 107 pages.

3. "An Estimate of the Manners of the present Times." 12mo, 23 pages.

This was an exceedingly characteristic piece. With terrible severity, he lashes the vices of the age; the slothfulness of people of fashion; the increase of luxury, both in meat, drink, dress, and furniture; and lewdness of every kind. He writes: "A total ignorance of God is almost universal among us. The exceptions are exceeding few, whether among the learned or unlearned. High and low, cobblers, tinkers, hackney coachmen, men and maid servants, soldiers,

[1] Dyson's "History of Methodism in the Isle of Wight."

1782 Age 79 sailors, tradesmen of all ranks, lawyers, physicians, gentlemen, lords, are as ignorant of the Creator of the world as Mahommedans or pagans."

4. The *Arminian Magazine.* 8vo, 680 pages. Here we have an engraving of the new chapel in City Road, with portraits of George Story, etc. About forty pages are filled with a continuation of Wesley's translation of the Dialogues of Castellio on Election and Free Will. There are long extracts from Wesley's "Survey of the Wisdom of God in Creation"; and from Dr. Watts's Treatise on the Passions. Remarks upon Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding make a part of every number. Memoirs and happy deaths are more numerous than ever. There are sixty letters, and as many poems. There are six original sermons by Wesley himself. One, on "Redeeming the Time," is a vigorous enforcement of the principles propounded in his letter to his niece in 1781.[1] Another is a remarkable homily on "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return"; and another, equally striking, is on God's six days' work. Then there is his magnificent sermon on, "Not as the transgression, so is the free gift." And, lastly, there is his terrific discourse on the Punishments of Hell. If the *Arminian Magazine* had done nothing more than give birth to sermons like these, it would have rendered incalculable service to the cause of Christ.

In addition to the above, the magazine contains several original articles, by Wesley's pen, of great interest and importance. In one, on Persecuting Papists, he says: "I set out in early life with an utter abhorrence of persecution in every form, and a full conviction, that every man has a right to worship God according to his own conscience. I would not hurt a hair of the head of Romanists. Meantime, I would not put it into their power to hurt me, or any other persons whom they believe to be heretics. I would neither kill, nor be killed. I wish them well; but I dare not trust them." In another article there is an onslaught on the "Divinity and Philosophy of the highly illuminated Jacob Behmen"; con-

[1] In 1783, this sermon was reprinted in a separate form, without Wesley's knowledge, by a gentleman of Cambridge, in 12mo.

cluding thus: "May we not pronounce, with the utmost certainty, of one who thus distorts, mangles, and murders the word of God, That the light which is in him is darkness; that he is *illuminated* from beneath, rather than from above; and that he ought to be styled *Demonosopher*, rather than *Theosopher*?" 1782 Age 79

This was savage; and Wesley's old friend, Mr. Harry Brooke, of Dublin, wrote him a letter of earnest remonstrance; to which Wesley replied as follows.

"*April* 21, 1783.

"DEAR HARRY,—Your letter gave me pleasure and pain. It gave me pleasure, because it was written in a mild and loving spirit; but it gave me pain, because I found I had pained you, whom I so tenderly love and esteem. But I shall do it no more. I sincerely thank you for your kind reproof. It is a precious balm, and will, I trust, in the hands of the Great Physician, be the means of healing my sickness. I am so sensible of your real friendship herein, that I cannot write without tears. The words you mention were too strong. They will no more fall from my mouth.

"I am, dear Harry, affectionately yours,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

This may serve as an *erratum*, belonging to the *Arminian Magazine* of 1782.

[1] Walton's "Memorial of W. Law," p. 91; and Brooke's Life, p. 194.

1783 Age 80

ONE of the first entries in Wesley's journal, in 1783, is the following. "Friday, January 10—I paid one more visit to Mr. Perronet, now in his ninetieth year. I do not know so venerable a man. His understanding is little, if at all, impaired; and his heart seems to be all love. A little longer, I hope, he will remain here, to be a blessing to all that see and hear him." This is beautiful, after an unbroken friendship of about forty years.

Another entry, equally deserving of being noted, was as follows: "Sunday, January 19—I preached in St. Thomas's church in the afternoon, and at St. Swithin's in the evening. The tide is now turned; so that I have more invitations to preach in churches than I can accept of." What a contrast between 1783 and 1739!

Wesley was an unendowed clergyman; but was not unsupported. The funds, raised for his purposes, were large; but his own appropriation from them, not equal to the poor parson's, who was "passing rich on £40 a year." In reference to the London annual audit, he writes: "Friday, February 21—At our yearly meeting for that purpose, we examined our yearly accounts, and found the money received, (just answering the expense,) was upwards of £3000 a year. But that is nothing to me: what I receive of it, yearly, is neither more nor less than £30."

Wesley was an old man; but he was still an outdoor preacher: for five-and-forty years he had been branded as a schismatic and a Dissenter; but he was still an ardent Churchman. Hence the following, addressed to Joseph Taylor, one of his itinerant preachers.

"LONDON, *January* 16, 1783.

"DEAR JOSEPH,—I am glad to hear so good an account of Marazion. You must endeavour to hire a larger room at Truro. We shall not build any more in haste. I often preach abroad, in winter as well as summer.

"In my journals, in the magazine, in every possible way, I have advised

the Methodists to keep to the Church. They that do this most prosper best in their souls; I have observed it long. If ever the Methodists in general were to leave the Church, I must leave them. 1783 Age 80

"I am, dear Joseph, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

An extract from another letter may be inserted here, showing that, rightly or wrongly, the Methodist preachers of the present day have departed from one of the principles of their founder. Ministerial classes are now almost general. Hear what Wesley had to say, on this subject, to John Cricket, then stationed, with Henry Moore, at Londonderry.

"LONDON, *February* 10, 1783.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—You must immediately resume the form at least of a Methodist society. I positively forbid you, or any preacher, to be a leader; rather put the most insignificant person in each class to be the leader of it. And try if you cannot persuade three men, if no more, and three women, to meet in band.

"Hope to the end! You shall see better days! The plainer you speak, the more good you will do. Derry will bear plain dealing. I am just as well as I was forty years ago.

"I am, yours affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

The hale old man soon found himself in a different plight. On March 2, he set off for Bristol, in the neighbourhood of which he spent the next twelve days, preaching and meeting classes. He then became seriously unwell; but, for two days longer, continued preaching, when he was obliged to take his bed. He had a deep tearing cough; was weak and heavy, and in a fever. He had fixed the next morning for commencing his journey to Ireland, and had sent notice to Stroud, and various other places, of the days wherein he purposed to visit them. Fortunately, the Rev. Brian Collins was at hand, and undertook to supply his appointments as far as Worcester. Accordingly, Mr. Collins, in the morning of March 17, set out to preach at Stroud; but Wesley, finding himself better, in the afternoon, imprudently set out after him, and actually gave a short exhortation to the Stroud society. For the next three days, he was dangerously ill. The whole nervous system was violently agitated. His cough was most distressing. He

[1] *The Wesleyan*, Sept. 9, 1846.
[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xiv., p. 343.

1783 Age 80 was seized with cramp. He was bereft of strength, "scarce able to move, and much less to think." Before leaving Bristol, he wrote the following unpublished letter to Miss Hester Ann Roe, afterwards Mrs. Rogers.

"BRISTOL, *March* 16, 1783.

"MY DEAR HETTY,—It has frequently been on my mind of late, that my pilgrimage is nearly at an end; and one of our sisters here told us this morning a particular dream which she had two months ago. She dreamt, that the time of conference was come, and that she was in a church expecting me to enter; when she saw a coffin brought in, followed by Dr. Coke and Mr. Fletcher, and then by all our preachers walking two and two. A fortnight ago, she dreamt the same dream again. Such a burying I have ordered in my will, absolutely forbidding either hearse or coach.

"I intended to have written a good deal more. For a few days, I have had just such a fever as I had in Ireland a few years ago. But all is well. I am in no pain; but the wheel of life seems scarcely able to move. Yet, I made a shift to preach this morning to a crowded audience, and hope to say something to them this afternoon. I love that word, 'And Ishmael died in the presence of all his brethren.'

"I am, in life or death, my dear sister, yours affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

What was the result? The news of Wesley's being dangerously ill flew far and wide. A number of the preachers met together to pray for a further prolongation of his life; and, from that time, he rapidly recovered.[2] For three days he lay at Stroud, in great danger. On the morning of the fourth day, he wrote: "A violent fit of the cramp carried the fever quite away; and, perceiving this, I took chaise without delay, and reached Worcester in the afternoon. Here I overtook Mr. Collins, who had supplied all my appointments, with a remarkable blessing to the people; and, the next morning, I gave a short exhortation, and then went on to Birmingham." At Birmingham, he was electrified, and "ventured to preach three quarters of an hour." He then made his way to Hinckley, where, for three days, he preached morning and evening, "to a serious and well behaved people." He then visited other societies on his way to Holyhead, and reached Dublin on April 13.

For three weeks, he was the guest of Mr. Henry Brooke,

[1] Manuscript letter. [2] Mrs. Rogers' Life, p. 473.

and was employed in healing serious divisions in the Dublin society.[1] Four days were spent in holding a conference with his Irish preachers, at which, he says, "all was peace and love." "I wish," he writes, "all our English preachers were of the same spirit with the Irish, among whom is no jarring string. I never saw such simplicity and teachableness run through a body of preachers before."[2] This was a high compliment paid to Thomas Rutherford, Andrew Blair, Zechariah Yewdall, Richard Boardman, Thomas Barber, Henry Moore, John Cricket, John Crook, and their twenty-six colleagues in Christian enterprise and labour. 1783 Age 80

Wesley embarked for England on the 8th of May, and, after preaching at Warrington, Liverpool, Wigan, Bolton, and other places, reached Manchester nine days afterwards. Here he had an enormous sacramental service, at which thirteen or fourteen hundred communicants were present: "such a sight," says he, "as, I believe, was never seen in Manchester before." "I believe," he adds, "there is no place but London where we have so many souls so deeply devoted to God."

Leaving Manchester, he proceeded to Macclesfield, where a week never passed "in which some were not justified, and some renewed in love." He preached, for the first time, at Buxton, where John Knowles and his wife were almost the only Methodists, and frequently rode on horseback to Stockport, a distance of sixteen miles, to hear the Methodist preachers.[3] Here he married a couple of his friends, and preached in the parish church. He arrived in London on May 31.

On June 11, accompanied by Messrs. Brackenbury, Broadbent, and Whitfield, he set out for Holland. For more than forty years, Wesley had been incessantly at work forming Methodist societies. Up to the present, he had never indulged in the luxury of a ministerial holiday; and we are not sure, that his trip to Holland should be regarded in such a light as that. Still, there was a difference between this journey and others. In other instances, his object was to institute Methodist societies, or to strengthen

[1] Life of Brooke, p. 100. [2] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 141.
[3] *Methodist Magazine*, 1851, p. 313.

1783 Age 80 those already formed; in this instance, that was no part of the object at which he aimed. He went, says Mr. Moore, "partly for relaxation, and partly to indulge and enlarge his catholic spirit, by forming an acquaintance with the truly pious in foreign nations." The fact is, one of his own local preachers, whom he highly esteemed, Mr. William Ferguson, had removed to Holland, and, by his earnest piety, had attracted the attention of the public generally, including many of the principal inhabitants and persons in authority. He spoke much of Wesley and of the Methodists, and distributed Wesley's sermons among his friends. The result was a general wish to see the veteran evangelist, and to hear him for themselves. One difficulty, however, was in the way. Wesley was acquainted, to a greater or less extent, with the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, the English, French, German, and Spanish languages; but he knew nought of Dutch. This objection was surmounted by Mr. Ferguson's son, Jonathan, offering to act as his interpreter.[1] Accordingly, off Wesley went, accompanied by the three preachers above mentioned.

His visit was eminently pleasant. Ministers of religion welcomed him; and persons of high rank showed him honour. At Rotterdam, he preached twice, in the episcopal church, to large congregations, and says: "Were it only for this, I am glad I came to Holland." At the Hague, in the house of a lady of the first quality, he met a dozen ladies and two military gentlemen, expounded the first three verses of the thirteenth of the first epistle to the Corinthians, and prayed, Captain M—— interpreting sentence by sentence. Wesley writes: "I believe, this hour was well employed." He held a sort of service in the passenger boat between Haarlem and Amsterdam. That is, he and his friends began to sing a hymn; the people listened; Wesley talked; Ferguson interpreted; "and all our hearts," says Wesley, "were strangely

[1] The Fergusons, father and son, were notable persons. Mr. Ferguson, sen., was a well known local preacher for upwards of sixty years; Jonathan, his son, was a friend, and sometimes the travelling companion, of John Howard the philanthropist. He was a hearty Methodist, a happy Christian, and, at the age of eighty, died a triumphant death, at Islington, in 1844.—(*Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 292.)

knit together, so that, when we came to Amsterdam, they dismissed us with abundance of blessings." 1783 Age 80

At Utrecht, Wesley wrote: "June 28—I have this day lived fourscore years; and, by the mercy of God, my eyes are not waxed dim, and what little strength of body or mind I had thirty years since, just the same I have now. God grant I may never live to be useless! rather may I

> 'My body with my charge lay down,
> And cease at once to work and live!'"

On the same day, he made a short excursion. Hence, the following extract from the diary of the Moravian congregation at Zeyst:

"1783, June 28.—We kept the children's prayer day. The Rev. John Wesley, the well known Methodist minister, arrived here in the afternoon, with several other ministers. After visiting his old friend, Brother Anton, he paid a hurried visit to the brethren's house, and sisters' house; and then attended a children's lovefeast, at three o'clock; on which occasion, as it happened to be his eightieth birthday, the children sang a few benedictory verses for him; the congregation closing the service by singing 'The grace of our Lord be with us all!' At 4.30 p.m. he and his companions returned to Utrecht, where he had preached the day before."

Wesley spent altogether seventeen days in Holland, and was delighted with his visit. He writes: "I can by no means regret either the trouble or expense, which attended this little journey. It opened me a way into, as it were, a new world; where the land, the buildings, the people, the customs, were all such as I had never seen before. But as those with whom I conversed were of the same spirit with my friends in England, I was as much at home in Utrecht and Amsterdam, as in Bristol and London." "There is a blessed work at the Hague, and many other of the principal cities; and, in their simplicity of spirit, and plainness of dress, the believers vie with the old English Methodists. In affection, they are not inferior to any. It was with the utmost difficulty we could break from them."[1] "Two of our sisters, when we left the Hague, came twelve miles with us on the way; and one of our brethren, of Amsterdam, came to take leave of us to

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 358.

1783 Age 80 Utrecht, above thirty miles. I believe, if my life be prolonged, I shall pay them a visit at least every other year. Had I had a little more time, I would have visited our brethren in Friesland, and Westphalia likewise; for a glorious work of God is lately broken out in both these provinces."[1]

Wesley got back to London on July 4. Ten days later, he set off to his conference at Bristol. "I expect," says he, "a good deal of difficulty at this conference, and shall stand in need of the prayers of you and your friends."[2] His apprehension was realised; hence the following entry in his journal: "July 29—Our conference began, at which we considered two important points: first, the case of Birstal house; and, secondly, the state of Kingswood school. With regard to the former, our brethren earnestly desired, that I would go to Birstal myself, believing this would be the most effectual way of bringing the trustees to reason. With regard to the latter, we all agreed, that either the school should cease, or the rules of it be particularly observed: particularly, that the children should never play, and that a master should be always present with them."

We need not recur to the first of these points, except to add, that the Birstal chapel case, no doubt, led to the adoption of the following resolutions:

"*Question* 21. What houses are to be built this year?

"*Answer.* None that are not already begun.

"*Q.* 22. Has not the needless multiplying of preaching houses been a great evil?

"*A.* So it appears.

"*Q.* 23. How may this be prevented?

"*A.* By permitting none for the future to beg for any house, except in the circuit where it stands.

"*Q.* 24. What can be done to get all our preaching houses settled on the conference plan?

"*A.* Let Dr. Coke visit the societies throughout England, as far as is necessary for the accomplishment of this end; and let the respective assistants give him all the support in their power."

Such was the commission given to Dr. Coke, a weary and worrying one.

Kingswood school, however, was as great a bore as Birstal

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 60. [2] Ibid. p. 60.

chapel. It had now existed for five-and-thirty years; it had been to Wesley a source of almost ceaseless trouble, and was now in a worse state than ever. Nevertheless, it was a far famed institution; and, besides the sons of itinerant preachers, it had, at this very time, *parlour boarders* from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and the West Indies. None of the scholars however, were remarkable for piety or learning; and the *young gentlemen*, just mentioned, had spoiled the discipline of the school. Thomas Simpson, M.A., was head master; Mrs. Simpson housekeeper; Cornelius Bayley was English teacher, with a salary of £12 per annum and his board; Vincent de Boudry was occasional French teacher; and C. R. Bond a sort of half boarder, and assistant to Bayley.[1] 1783 Age 80

"My design in building the house at Kingswood," says Wesley, "was to have therein a Christian family; every member whereof, (children excepted,) should be alive to God, and a pattern of all holiness. Here it was that I proposed to educate a few children, according to the accuracy of the Christian model. And almost as soon as we began, God gave us a token for good, four of the children receiving a clear sense of pardon. But, at present, the school does not, in any wise, answer the design of its institution, either with regard to religion or learning. The children are not religious: they have not the power, and hardly the form of religion. Neither do they improve in learning better than at other schools; no, nor yet so well. Insomuch, that some of our friends have been obliged to remove their children to other schools. And no wonder that they improve so little either in religion or learning; for the rules of the school are not observed at all. All in the house ought to rise, take their three meals, and go to bed at a fixed hour. But they do not. The children ought never to be alone, but always in the presence of a master. This is totally neglected; in consequence of which, they run up and down the wood, and mix, yea, fight with the colliers' children. They ought never to play: but they do, every day; yea, in the school. Three maids are sufficient; now there are four; and but one, at most, truly pious.

"How may these evils be remedied, and the school reduced to its

[1] Simpson was a man of learning and piety, but too easy for his situation. On leaving Kingswood, he wished to become an itinerant preacher, but set up a school at Keynsham, where his son ultimately was made vicar. Bayley was a good Hebrew scholar, became a doctor of divinity, had a church, St. James's, built for him in Manchester, and was highly respected for his piety, usefulness, and high church principles. De Boudry began a school on Kingsdown, Bristol, and long bore the character of a pious, steady, honest man. Bond was affectionate, but not talented, and aspired to become a clergyman. Such is the testimony of Adam Clarke; and it is only fair to give it as a counterpoise to the discreditable state of the Kingswood school committed to their care.

1783 Age 80 original plan? It must be mended or ended: for no school is better than the present school. Can any be a master, that does not rise at five, observe *all* the rules, and see that others observe them? There should be three masters, and an usher, chiefly to be with the children out of school. The head master should have nothing to do with temporal things."[1]

This was a dark picture; doubtless the result of bad management. Easy, good tempered Mr. Simpson was a scholar; his wife, the real governor, was an ogress. A woman that rubbed Adam Clarke with the "infernal unguent" to cure him of an imaginary itch; thrust him into a solitary room, with a wretched old bedstead, and left him there without book or fire; and from whom Adam, when he heard her voice, was disposed to run in the utmost fright, was not the woman to manage Kingswood school. "She was probably very clever," says Clarke; "all stood in awe of her; for my own part, I feared her more than I feared Satan himself. The school was the worst I had ever seen, though the teachers were men of adequate learning. It was perfectly *disorganised;* and, in several respects, each did what was right in his own eyes. There was no efficient plan pursued; they mocked at religion; and trampled under foot all the laws. The little children of the preachers suffered great indignities; and, it is to be feared, their treatment there gave many of them a rooted enmity against religion for life. The parlour boarders had every kind of respect paid to them, and the others were shamefully neglected. Scarcely any care was taken either of their bodies or souls."

Poor Kingswood! Could all this be strictly accurate? Probably it was; for the following, given as a fact, prepares the mind for almost anything in the form of stupidity, and ignorant confusion. "At the table," writes Adam Clarke, "every person when he drank was obliged to run the following gauntlet. He must drink the health of Mr. Simpson, Mrs. Simpson, Miss Simpson, Mr. Bayley, Mr. De Boudry, all the foreign gentlemen, then all the parlour boarders, down one side of the long table, and up the other, one by one, and all the *visitors* who might happen to be there: after which it was lawful for him to drink his glass of beer."[2]

[1] Minutes of Conference, 1783.

[2] "Life of Adam Clarke," in three vols., 1833, vol. i., pp. 153-168.

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Wesley was quite right. No school at all was better than such a school as this. It was high time to mend it or end it. In his magazine, for the very month in which the conference of 1783 was held, Wesley published an article, by his own pen, entitled, "A Thought on the Manner of Educating Children," in which he strongly maintains, that all education ought to be religious; but adds, probably with the state of Kingswood in his eye,—"Even religious masters may still be mistaken with regard to the manner of instilling religion into children. They may not have the spirit of government, to which some even good men are utter strangers. They may habitually lean to this or that extreme, of remissness or of severity. And if they either give children too much of their own will, or needlessly and churlishly restrain them; if they either use no punishment at all, or more than is necessary, the leaning either to one extreme or the other may frustrate all their endeavours. In the latter case, it will not be strange, if religion stink in the nostrils of those that were so educated. They will naturally look on it as an austere, melancholy thing; and, if they think it necessary to salvation, they will esteem it a necessary evil, and so put it off as long as possible."

Wesley was not the man to hesitate in changing his officials when change was necessary. Mr. Simpson was dismissed; Thomas McGeary, A.M., a young man of twenty-two, took his place.[1] Cornelius Bayley had previously made up his mind to leave, in order to enter the ministry of the Established Church;[2] and Thomas Welch, an assistant in a school at Coventry, applied to be appointed his successor. Wesley wrote to him as follows.

"BRISTOL, *August* 15, 1783.

"DEAR THOMAS,—You seem to be the man I want. As to salary, you will have £30 a year; board, etc., will be thirty more. But do not come *for money*. (1) Do not come at all, unless purely to raise a Christian school. (2) Anybody behaving ill, I will turn away immediately. (3) I expect you to be in the school eight hours a day. (4) In all things, I expect you should be circumspect. But you will judge better by considering the printed rules. The sooner you come the better.

"I am, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[3]

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1788, p. 1. [2] Manuscript letter.
[3] *Methodist Magazine*, 1817, p. 324.

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Mr. Welch was a young man of twenty-three. Two years before, he had become a Methodist. The Coventry society, then extremely feeble, was loath to lose him; and some of its members succeeded in persuading him to remain where he was. He wrote to Wesley to this effect; and Wesley answered: "You use me very ill. I have turned away three masters on your account. The person, who gives you this advice, is wanting either in common sense or common honesty."[1] Mr. Welch became a valuable local preacher, and lived and died a Methodist. Thomas Jones took the place that he declined, and, for three years, retained it, when he was ordained a clergyman of the Church of England.

This was Wesley's last complaint of Kingswood. Twelve months afterwards, the school and family were visited with a gracious outpouring of God's good Spirit. In 1786, he says: "I found the school in excellent order." "It is now one of the pleasantest spots in England. I found all things just according to my desire; the rules being well observed, and the whole behaviour of the children showing, that they were now managed with the wisdom that cometh from above." In 1787, he expressed himself to the same effect, as, in fact, he did to the end of life. The last entry in his journal, in reference to this memorable place,—a child, always with him a pet, though often troublesome,—was this: "1789, September 11—I went over to Kingswood: sweet recess! where everything is now just as I wish. But

'Man was not born in shades to lie!'

Let us work now; we shall rest by-and-by. I spent some time with the children; all of whom behaved well: several are much awakened, and a few rejoicing in the favour of God."

We must now bid a final adieu to dear old Kingswood school, the sacred scene of so many Methodistic memories, and turn to other matters connected with the conference of 1783.

The number of members was reported to be 45,955; but all these were Methodists within the limits of the United

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1817, p. 324.

Kingdom. No account was taken of the 13,740 Methodists in America. No mention was made of Antigua, where nearly 2000 persons had joined John Baxter's society; and where, in this very year, the first Methodist chapel in the torrid zone was completed.[1] 1783 Age 80

Nova Scotia also is not noticed; though it had been the scene of a most blessed work, and William Black had written to Wesley, urgently asking him to send them preachers. The following were Wesley's answers.

"LONDON, *February* 26, 1783.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I did indeed very strongly expostulate with the Bishop of London, concerning his refusing to ordain a pious man, without learning, while he ordained others that, to my knowledge, had no piety, and but a moderate share of learning.

"Our next conference will begin in July; and I have great hopes, we shall then be able to send you assistance. One of our preachers informs me, he is willing to go to any part of Africa or America. He does not regard danger or toil; nor, indeed, does he count his life dear unto himself, so that he may testify the gospel of the grace of God, and win sinners to Christ. But I cannot advise any person to go alone. Our Lord sent His disciples two and two. And I do not despair of finding another young man, as much devoted to God as he.

"Of Calvinism, mysticism, and antinomianism, have a care; for they are the bane of true religion; and one or other of them has been the grand hindrance of the work of God, wherever it has broke out.

"I am, my dear brother, yours affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

The second letter to William Black was as follows.

"LONDON, *July* 13, 1783.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—It is a rule with me, to answer all the letters which I receive. If, therefore, you have not received an answer to every letter which you have written, it must be, either that your letter or my answer has been intercepted.

"I do not wonder at all, that, after that great and extraordinary work of God, there should be a remarkable decay. So we have found it in almost all places. A swift increase is generally followed by a decrease equally swift. All we can do to prevent it, is continually to exhort all who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, to remember our Lord's words, 'Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.'

"The school at Kingswood is exceeding full; nevertheless there shall be room for you. And it is very probable, if you should live to return to

[1] Coke's Life, by Drew, p. 167.
[2] Black's Memoirs, p. 99.

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Halifax, you may carry one or more preachers with you. I hope you will live as brethren, and have a free and open intercourse with each other.

"I am, my dear brother, affectionately yours,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Such was the wish of William Black; and such was Wesley's intention; but it was not until 1785, that Nova Scotia appeared in the minutes of conference as a Methodist circuit. "The harvest truly was great; but the labourers were few." And yet all that offered were not accepted.

At the conference of 1783, there was present a young Welshman, of middle stature, thin and delicate, with a somewhat elongated face, an eye of genius, and a capacious forehead, who offered himself as an itinerant preacher, but whom Wesley and his brethren, from the delicacy of his health and the feebleness of his voice, thought not equal to the arduous labours of the itinerant office. He had been converted under the preaching of Samuel Bardsley, and, soon after his offer was declined by Wesley, was ordained by Bishop Horsley, and became vicar of Llanbister. The vicarage had a parlour, with a slab stone floor, an open chimney, and a hearth on which burnt a fire of wood and turf. It had a kitchen, and two upper rooms of the same humble character. For many a long year this was the home of the Rev. David Lloyd, "a philosopher, a poet, and a divine," says Dr. Dixon, "who seemed to enjoy, with unmixed contentment, the inheritance given him by Providence." For fifty years, his wife was a Methodist, and his parsonage a Methodist preachers' home. Besides poetical works of considerable merit, the good vicar became the author of a large octavo volume of very valuable essays, entitled "Horæ Theologicæ."[2] Mr. Lloyd was a perfect enthusiast on the missionary question, and gave a subscription of £10 a year to the Methodist and Church missionary societies respectively; presented each with a donation of £500; and left the residue of his property, after other demands had been satisfied, to be equally divided between these two institutions. He also built a Methodist chapel on his estate, and secured it to the connexion by deed. Thus, as a diligent clergyman of the Church of

[1] Black's Memoirs, p. 109.

[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1816, p. 832.

England, and the friend and host of Methodist preachers, lived and died the good vicar of Llanbister,—a candidate rejected by the conference of 1783.[1] 1783 Age 80

In the midst of this conference, Wesley was again seized with an alarming illness. Dr. Drummond attended him twice a day. His friends thought, that his end was come; and he himself apprehended that the cramp would probably reach his stomach, and occasion sudden death. "I have been reflecting on my past life," said he to his faithful nurse, Joseph Bradford; "I have been wandering up and down between fifty and sixty years, endeavouring, in my poor way, to do a little good to my fellow creatures; and, now, it is probable that there are but a few steps between me and death; and what have I to trust to for salvation? I can see nothing which I have done or suffered, that will bear looking at. I have no other plea than this:

'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.'"[2]

For eighteen days, Wesley hung between life and death, when, finding himself somewhat better, and "being," as he says, "unwilling to be idle," he spent an hour with the Bristol penitents. The day following, he preached twice, and, the day after that, on Monday, August 25, set out again on his much loved gospel ramblings. Death itself, to Wesley, was more desirable than life without work.

Preaching on his way at Gloucester, Worcester, and Birmingham, he came, on August 29, to Stafford, where he writes: "I preached, for the first time, to a large and deeply attentive congregation. It is now the day of small things here; but the grain of mustard seed may grow up into a great tree."

Four years before this, Dr. Coke was passing through Stafford, and, while dining at the inn, sent the bellman round to announce to the inhabitants that he would preach in the market place. Jeremiah Brettell, his companion, took a table from the hostelry; the doctor mounted; the people came; all listened with deep attention; and some expressed a wish

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1863, sixpenny edition, p. 1.
[2] Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 389.

1783 Age 80 for the visit to be repeated. Soon after, a little society was formed,[1] which, in 1784, consisted of sixteen members, Henry Robinson being leader.[2]

From Stafford, Wesley made his way to Macclesfield, where he preached twice in the Rev. David Simpson's church, and had a sacramental service, at which seven hundred communicants were present.

He was now proceeding to Birstal, to effect the settlement with the Birstal chapel trustees, as already related. The journey occupied sixteen days; the distance was five or six hundred miles; according to his wont, he preached all the way there and back; and yet, the old man, who a month before had been on the very verge of death, returned to Bristol on the 13th of September, almost as vigorous as ever.

An unpublished letter, belonging to this period, may be welcome here. It was addressed to John Atlay, his book steward.

"LEEDS, *September* 3, 1783.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—The schoolmasters for Kingswood are fixed, and expected there every day. Mr. Simpson's sister is the housekeeper, who is come hither in her way to Bristol. Let no man or woman go to West Street chapel without my appointment. It is a matter of deep concern. The building or not building, at Birstal, does not depend upon me, but the trustees. J. Fenwick is to correct the press chiefly, in the absence of Dr. Coke, and to transcribe tracts for me. And he may receive his little salary, at least, till I return to London.

"I am, with love to sister Atlay, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Wesley remained in the neighbourhood of Bristol till October 6, and employed the interval, not only in preaching, but in begging money to relieve the distresses of the destitute, and in visiting the poor recipients at their own houses. "I was surprised," says he, "to find no murmuring spirits among them, but many that were truly happy in God; and all of them appeared to be exceeding thankful for the scanty relief which they received."

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[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1830, p. 657.

[2] The names were: Henry Robinson, Mary Robinson, Charles Machin, John Smith, Ann Stockdale, William Holding, Sarah Holding, John Rowland, Sarah Jervis, Thomas Smith, Elizabeth Smith, John Ward, Ann Ward, John Kelsall, Thomas Elley, and William Freepounde—(Burslem old circuit book.)

No wonder, that such a man was popular; and no wonder, that his presence was a loadstone drawing the poor around him. Sometimes, however, their absence would have been more welcome than their company. A month after this, Wesley was at Norwich, and, when leaving, had a whole host of poverty stricken people about his carriage. His purse was low, containing only what was necessary to take him back to London; and the clamour of the mendicant crowd, for once, disturbed his temper. Somewhat sharply he said: "I have nothing for you. Do you suppose I can support the poor in every place?" At the moment, he was entering his carriage; his foot slipped; and he fell upon the ground. Feeling as though God Himself had rebuked him for his hasty words, he turned to Joseph Bradford, and, with subdued emphasis, remarked: "It is all right, Joseph; it is all right; it is only what I deserved; for if I had no *other* good to give, I ought, at least, to have given them good words."[1] 1783 Age 80

The concluding months of the year were employed, as usual, partly in London, and partly in the surrounding counties.

Considering Wesley's advanced age, his labours are without parallel. Here we have,—not a man of Herculean frame, big, brawny, and heavy, fed on the daintiest diet, and stimulated with the costliest wines,—but a man small in stature, his weight eight stones and ten pounds (exactly the same as it was fourteen years before), his age eighty, without indulgences, feeding, for eight months in every year, chiefly at the tables of the poor, sleeping on all sorts of beds and in all sorts of rooms, without a wife, without a child, really without a home; and yet a man always cheerful, always happy, always hard at work, flying with all the sprightliness of youth throughout the three kingdoms, preaching twice every day, indoors and out of doors, in churches, chapels, cottages, and sheds, and everywhere superintending the complex and growing interests of the numerous societies which had sprung into buoyant being through the labours of himself and his godly helpers. The man was a marvel, such as the world sees only now and then. Once show him the path of duty, and with a dauntless

[1] Everett's Life of Clarke.

1783 Age 80 step he trod it. Nothing frightened him; nothing could allure from the post assigned to him by Providence. However arduous the work, and however great the privations and the dangers, if his Master bid him go, he went, trusting in his Master's power for defence and help. "My brother Charles," he once remarked, "amid the difficulties of our early ministry, used to say: 'If the Lord would give me wings, I would fly.' I used to answer, 'If the Lord bid me fly, I would trust Him for the wings.'"[1]

One of the last acts of this youthful octogenarian, in 1783, was to pay a pastoral visit to another of the most remarkable men of that period,—Dr. Samuel Johnson, who was now suffering his last illness, and died twelve months afterwards.

Wesley's publications, in 1783, were the following.

1. "The Spirit of Prayer." 24 pages, 12mo.
2. "Baxter's Call to the Unconverted." 76 pages, 12mo.
3. "The Important Question. A Sermon. By John Wesley." 23 pages, 12mo.

Besides these, Wesley also published many new editions of former tracts, for the use of his recently instituted tract society, most of these reissues having upon the title page, "This tract is not to be sold, but given away."

His principal publication, however, was his *Arminian Magazine*, and this was as vigorously conducted as before. Again, we have half-a-dozen original sermons, by Wesley himself, all of them remarkable, and among the most able that he ever published. These include his two discourses on good and fallen angels; in which he propounds the doctrine, that good angels minister to our happiness, by assisting us in our searches after truth, by preserving us in danger, by dreams, etc.: and that all evil angels are united under one common head; and are often the authors of accidents, diseases, fires, storms, and earthquakes. Then there is his elaborate sermon on "The Mystery of Iniquity," in which he expresses the opinion, that the "greatest blow that genuine Christianity ever received was when Constantine the Great called himself a Christian, and poured in a flood of

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1825, p. 390.

riches, honours, and power upon the Christians, more especially upon the clergy." Next we have his curious homily on the Spread of Christianity, where he hazards the conjecture that truth will be transmitted from this nation to that, until at last it reaches the South Sea islands. And, finally, there are his characteristic sermons on Family Religion, and on Training Children. As usual, every number of the magazine has an article on the Calvinian controversy. Biographical accounts are still numerous. Extracts from his own Natural Philosophy, and from Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, form a part of each of the twelve numbers; as do also Benson's letters in reply to Madan's treatise on polygamy; likewise extracts from Dr. Hilldrop's able "Thoughts on the Brute Creation," professedly to prove a theory which Wesley liked, the ultimate restoration of the brute creation; and a series of profoundly thoughtful articles on "The True Original of the Soul." Nine numbers have extracts from Baxter's "Certainty of the World of Spirits, fully evinced by unquestionable Histories of Apparitions and Witchcrafts." There are forty-five letters; forty-one poems; and a number of portraits, including those of John Hampson and William Thom, both of whom left the Methodist connexion. There are also long continued extracts from Bryant's Analysis of Ancient Mythology, which Wesley pronounces to be "one of the most remarkable books, in its kind, which has been published for centuries." And, finally, there are Wesley's "Thoughts on the Writings of Baron Swedenborg." The baron, a little before he died, presented Wesley with his last and largest theological work, the "True Christian Religion"; but he failed to make a convert of him. Wesley believed him to be insane, and traced his insanity to a fever, which he had in London, when "he ran into the street stark naked, proclaimed himself the Messiah, and rolled himself in the mire." He was a "fine genius,—majestic though in ruins." 1783 Age 80

1784
Age 81

DR. WHITEHEAD calls the year 1784 "the grand *climacteric* year of Methodism, because of the changes which now took place in the form of its *original* constitution. Not," says he, "that these changes destroyed at once the *original* constitution of Methodism; but the seeds of its corruption and final dissolution were this year solemnly planted, and have since been carefully watered and nursed by a powerful party among the preachers."[1] The doctor was an able man; but he can scarcely be called a prophet. Of course, he refers to Wesley's deed of declaration, and Wesley's ordination of bishops for America; both of which must have due attention, before we conclude the present year.

Wesley himself, according to his own correspondence, seemed to grow younger as he grew older. In a letter to "the Rev. Walter Sellon, at Ledsham, near Ferrybridge, Yorkshire," and dated, "London, January 10, 1784," he writes:

"On the 28th of last June, I finished my eightieth year. When I was young, I had weak eyes, trembling hands, and abundance of infirmities. But, by the blessing of God, I have outlived them all. I have no infirmities now, but what I judge to be inseparable from flesh and blood. This hath God wrought. I am afraid you want the grand medicine which I use,—exercise and change of air."[2]

On the same day, he wrote another letter, now also, like the former, for the first time published. Methodism had recently been introduced, by a company of soldiers, into the Channel islands; and Mr. Robert Carr Brackenbury, with his servant, Alexander Kilham, had gone to promote its interests. The letter was addressed, "Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq., in St. Heliers, Isle of Jersey."

"LONDON, *January* 10, 1784.

"DEAR SIR,—While those poor sheep were scattered abroad, without

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[1] Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 404. [2] Manuscript letter.

any shepherd, and without any connection with each other, it is no wonder that they were cold and dead. I am glad you have gathered a few of them together, and, surely, if prayer be made concerning it, God will provide you with a convenient place to meet in. Perhaps an application to the gentlemen, who have hired the ballroom, might not be without success. 1784 Age 81

"'Tis pity but you had the 'Earnest Appeal' to present to the governor, as well as the minister. I trust both you and our newly connected brethren will overcome evil with good. We can easily print the rules here, and send them down with some other books. 'Tis good that every one should know our whole plan. We do not want any man to go on blindfold. Peace be with your spirit!

"I am, dear sir, your affectionate friend,

"J. WESLEY."

The first two months of 1784 were chiefly spent in London, with the exception of a flying visit to Colchester, and another to Nottingham; Wesley's errand to the last mentioned place being to "preach a charity sermon for the general hospital." He had a grand covenant service in City Road chapel, attended by upwards of eighteen hundred people. He took counsel with the London preachers, as to the desirability of the Methodists sending missionaries to India. He read "Orlando Furioso," and says, "Ariosto had, doubtless, an uncommon genius, and subsequent poets have been greatly indebted to him; yet, it is hard to say, which was the most out of his senses, the hero or the poet. He has not the least regard even to probability; his marvellous transcends all conception. Who, that is not himself out of his senses, would compare Ariosto with Tasso?"

On the 1st of March, the venerable Wesley,—as agile as a boy, above fourscore years of age, and yet reading the Italian poet with all the zest of a youth still at school,—set out on a seven months' journey, first to Bristol, then to Scotland, then to Leeds, then through Wales to the west of England, and then to London, which he reached on October 9. With a hasty step, we must try to follow him.

Wesley, as opportunity permitted, "intermeddled with all wisdom," and, to the end of life, showed, that a man is never too old to learn. At Bradford, in Wiltshire, he says: "I was convinced of two vulgar errors; the one, that nightingales will not live in cages; the other, that they only sing a month or two in the year. Samuel Rayner has now three nightin-

1784 gales in cages; and they sing almost all day long, from
Age 81 November to August."

At Stroud, he wrote: "Here, to my surprise, I found the morning preaching was given up, as also in the neighbouring places. If this be the case while I am alive, what must it be when I am gone? Give up this, and Methodism too will degenerate into a mere sect, only distinguished by some opinions and modes of worship."

Wesley considered, that preaching at five o'clock in the morning was the healthiest exercise in the world; and probably he was not far from being right. But besides this, these early matutinal services had now, for five-and-forty years, been one of the things which made the Methodists "a *peculiar* people," as well as "zealous of good works." No other church or community, in England, had a service like this. It was a religious ordinance which Wesley dearly loved. In thousands of instances, he and his friends had proved the words, "Those that seek Me *early* shall find Me." No wonder then, that he evinced alarm when he found the Methodists giving up the morning services. Three weeks after he was at backslidden Stroud, he came to Chester, and expressed himself in the strongest terms on this subject. He writes:

"I was surprised, when I came to Chester, to find that there also morning preaching was quite left off, for this worthy reason: 'Because the people will not come, or, at least, not in the winter.' If so, the Methodists are a fallen people. Here is proof. They have 'lost their first love'; and they never will or can recover it, till they 'do the first works.' As soon as I set foot in Georgia, I began preaching at five in the morning; and every communicant, that is, every serious person in the town, constantly attended throughout the year; I mean, came every morning, winter and summer, unless in the case of sickness. They did so till I left the province. In the year 1738, when God began His great work in England, I began preaching at the same hour, winter and summer, and never wanted a congregation. If they will not attend now, they have lost their zeal: and then, it cannot be denied, they are a fallen people. And, in the meantime, we are labouring to secure the preaching houses to the next generation! In the name of God, let us, if possible, secure the present generation from drawing back to perdition! Let all the preachers, that are still alive to God, join together as one man, fast and pray, lift up their voice as a trumpet, be instant, in season, out of season, to convince them that are fallen; and exhort them instantly to 'repent, and do the first works': this in particular,—rising in the morning, without which neither their souls nor bodies can long remain in health."

Perhaps this was looking at the thing too seriously. That early morning service is highly profitable cannot reasonably be called in question; but, that it should begin at the hour of five may fairly be disputed. Early risers are persons to be envied; they breathe the purest air, listen to the sweetest songs, and have promptings to worship God that the sluggard never feels. 1784 Age 81

At Tewkesbury, Wesley had to correct the "impropriety of standing at prayer, and sitting while singing praise." At Worcester, he "preached, to a crowded audience, in St. Andrew's church." At Madeley, he preached twice in the parish church, revised the vicar's letters to Dr. Priestley, and declared, that there was hardly another man in England, so fit to encounter the great Socinian philosopher as his friend from the mountains of Switzerland. At Stafford, he preached, to "a small company, in a deplorable hole, formerly a stable." At Lane End, near Newcastle under Lyne, in the face of one of the most piercing winds of the month of March, he preached, by moonlight, in the open air, the congregation being four times larger than the chapel could contain. At Burslem, also, for the same reason, he was obliged to abandon the chapel for the field. At Manchester, on Easter Sunday, he had "near a thousand communicants"; Thomas Taylor says, twelve hundred.[1]

Thus he employed himself all the way to Whitehaven, where he "had all the church ministers" to hear him, "and most of the gentry in the town"; and, to his evident surprise, "they all behaved with as much decency as if they had been colliers." At Edinburgh, he writes: "I am amazed at this people. Use the most cutting words, and apply them in the most pointed manner, still they *hear*, but *feel* no more than the seats they sit upon." Throughout Scotland, morning preaching and prayer-meetings had almost vanished. "At Aberdeen," he writes, "I talked largely with the preachers, and showed them the hurt it did both to them and the people, for any one preacher to stay six or eight weeks together in one place. Neither can he find matter for preaching every morning and evening, nor will the people come to hear him.

[1] Manuscript diary.

1784 Age 81 Hence, he grows cold by lying in bed, and so do the people. Whereas, if he never stays more than a fortnight together in one place, he may find matter enough, and the people will gladly hear him. The preachers immediately drew up such a plan for this circuit, which they determined to pursue."

From Aberdeen, Wesley went, by invitation, to Lady Banff's at Old Meldrum, where he preached twice; and thence to Keith, where he had a congregation to his heart's content, all the people poor, and "not a silk coat among them." At Forres, he was the guest of Sir Lodowick Grant. In making his way to Inverness, by the mistake of his coachman, he had to trudge, through heavy rain, twelve miles and a half on foot, but says, he "was no more tired" than when he first set out. At Elgin, he preached in the church, and significantly remarks: "I do not despair of good being done even here, provided the preachers be 'sons of thunder.'" At Newburgh, he found "the liveliest society in the kingdom." At Melval House, "the grand and beautiful seat of Lord Leven," he was hospitably entertained by the countess and her family, and, at their desire, preached from, "It is appointed unto men once to die." Here, also, he wrote his "Thoughts on Nervous Disorders." His next halting place was at Lady Maxwell's, "who appeared to be clearly saved from sin, although exceedingly depressed by the tottering tenement of clay."

After thus visiting most of the important towns in Scotland, Wesley reached Newcastle, where, on Whitsunday, he preached thrice to large congregations. A week later, he again set out, on his unwearied mission; and, at Stockton, "found an uncommon work of God among the children," upwards of sixty of whom, from the age of "six to fourteen, were under serious impressions, and earnestly desirous to save their souls." He writes: "As soon as I came down from the desk, I was enclosed by a body of children; all of whom sunk down upon their knees: so I kneeled down myself, and began praying for them." Beautiful picture this, well worth painting! No wonder that he adds: "abundance of people ran back into the house. The fire kindled, and ran from heart to heart, till few, if any, were unaffected. Is not this a new thing in the earth? God begins His work in children.

Thus it has been also in Cornwall, Manchester, and Epworth. 1784
Thus the flame spreads to those of riper years; till at length Age 81
they all know Him, and praise Him from the least unto the greatest."

Having visited the "dales," Darlington, Northallerton, Thirsk, Osmotherley, and other places, he made his way to Whitby, where he wrote: "The society here may be a pattern to all in England. They despise all ornaments but good works, together with a meek and quiet spirit. I did not see a ruffle, no, nor a fashionable cap among them; though many of them are in easy circumstances. About forty had a clear witness of being saved from inbred sin; and seemed to walk in the full light of God's countenance."

At Scarborough, Wesley attended church, and was regaled with one of the bitterest sermons he ever heard. "So," says he, "all I have done, to persuade the people to attend the church, is overturned at once! And all who preach thus will drive the Methodists from the church, in spite of all that I can do." Two years after this, in a letter to his brother, he wrote: "The last time I was at Scarborough, I earnestly exhorted our people to go to church; and I went myself. But the wretched minister preached such a sermon, that I could not in conscience advise them to hear him any more."[1]

From Scarborough, Wesley proceeded along the east coast to Hull; thence to Pocklington and York; and thence to Epworth, where he spent his birthday, and preached in the market place of the town, whose church, for nine-and-thirty years, had been blessed with the able and faithful ministry of his honoured father. He writes: "June 28—To-day I entered on my eighty-second year, and found myself just as strong to labour, and as fit for any exercise of body or mind, as I was forty years ago. I do not impute this to second causes, but to the sovereign Lord of all. It is He who bids the sun of life stand still, so long as it pleaseth Him. I am as strong at eighty-one, as I was at twenty-one; but abundantly more healthy, being a stranger to the headache, toothache, and other bodily disorders which attended me in my youth. We

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 144.

1784 Age 81 can only say, 'The Lord reigneth!' While we live, let us live to Him!"

Having spent a week in visiting the Lincolnshire societies, Wesley proceeded to various towns in the west riding of Yorkshire; and thence, for the first time, to Burnley. He writes: "Burnley had been tried for many years, but without effect. Now, high and low, rich and poor, flocked together from all quarters; and all were eager to hear, except one man, who was the town crier. He began to bawl amain, till his wife ran to him, and literally stopped his noise; she seized him with one hand, and clapped the other upon his mouth, so that he could not get out one word. God then began a work, which, I am persuaded, will not soon come to an end." Wesley's words were verified.

Thomas Dixon, who was appointed to the Colne circuit in 1784, remarks, in his unpublished diary: "The work of God at Burnley was very young; but many, during this year, were converted. The great men of the place were angry, and agreed to banish the Methodist preachers from the town. The proprietor of the preaching house sent us notice to quit the premises; and the rest of the gentlemen pledged themselves not to let us have another. But about a month before the expiration of the notice, the Lord converted a man, who had a house of his own, which he opened to the preachers; and now we had a better preaching place than we had before. Soon after a chapel was erected." One of the first members was John Eagin, who, for fifty years, maintained an unspotted character; and died, in 1836, saying, "I am happy."[1]

Leaving Burnley, Wesley went to Otley, where, marvellous to relate! he had a two days' rest. He then, on July 18, preached twice in Bingley church, a great part of his congregation being obliged to stand outside. He writes: "Before service, I stepped into the Sunday-school, which contains two hundred and forty children, taught every Sunday by several masters, and superintended by the curate. So many children, in one parish, are restrained from open sin, and taught a little good manners, at least, as well as to read the Bible. I find these schools springing up wherever I go. Perhaps God may

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1836, p. 397.

have a deeper end therein, than men are aware of. Who knows but some of these schools may become nurseries for Christians?" 1784 Age 81

This is Wesley's first notice of Sunday-schools. Though such schools had long existed in a few isolated cases, it was not until now that they attracted public attention. Miss Ball's Methodist Sunday-school at High Wycombe has been already mentioned; and it has also been stated, that Miss Cooke, a Methodist young lady (afterwards the wife of Samuel Bradburn), was the first to suggest to Robert Raikes the idea of instituting a Sunday-school at Gloucester. Raikes commenced that school about the year 1783. At all events, his account of it was dated Gloucester, June 5, 1784, and was published in the January number of Wesley's *Arminian Magazine*, for 1785, with the title, "An Account of the Sunday Charity Schools, lately begun in various parts of England." Wesley was one of the first to catch and patronise the Sunday-school idea. At Bingley, he visited the school before preaching in the church, and gave to Sunday-schools one of their happiest designations, "nurseries for Christians." Similar institutions had been begun in Leeds, where Wesley was about to hold his conference. The town was already divided into seven divisions; and had twenty-six schools, containing above two thousand scholars, taught by forty-five masters. Each school commenced at one o'clock in the afternoon, the children being taught reading, writing, and religion. At three, they were taken to their respective churches; then conducted back to school, where a portion of some useful book was read, a psalm sung, and the whole concluded with a form of prayer, composed and printed for that purpose. Boys and girls were kept separate. There were four "inquisitors," persons whose office it was to spend Sunday afternoon in visiting the twenty-six schools, to ascertain who were absent, and then in seeking the absentees at their homes or in the public streets. The masters were mostly pious men, and were paid from one to two shillings a Sunday for their services, according to their respective qualifications. Each had a written list of his scholars' names, which he was required to call over, every Sunday, at half-past one, and half-past five. Five clergymen

1784 visited the schools, and gave addresses; and the expenses
Age 81 of the first year, ending in July 1784, were about £234.

Such were the Sunday-schools at Leeds when Wesley, for the first time, visited one in the neighbouring town of Bingley. Manchester also had taken up Raikes' Methodist idea; and, on the 1st of August, 1784, Wesley's old friend, the Rev. Cornelius Bayley, D.D., who for ten years had been one of the masters of Kingswood school, but was now an ordained clergyman in this important city, published an "Address to the Public on Sunday-Schools," in which he gave an account of the schools at Leeds, and urged the men of Manchester to copy so excellent an example. Bayley's address produced a powerful effect; the magistrates patronised his scheme; and the result was, that Cornelius Bayley, D.D., the quondam Methodist, and master of Wesley's Kingswood school, became one of the chief, though not only, instruments of establishing Sunday-schools in Manchester and its neighbourhood.[1]

After visiting some of the intermediate towns and villages, Wesley arrived at Leeds, for the purpose of holding his annual conference. He writes:

"July 25, Sunday—I preached to several thousands at Birstal, and to, at least, as many at Leeds. July 27, Tuesday—Our conference began; at which four of our brethren, after long debate (in which Mr. Fletcher took much pains) acknowledged their fault, and all that was past was forgotten. July 29, Thursday—Being the public thanksgiving day, as there was not room for us in the old church, I read prayers, as well as preached, at our room. Having five clergymen to assist me, we administered the Lord's supper, as was supposed, to sixteen or seventeen

[1] On Sunday, September 18, 1870, the London Road Methodist Sunday-school, Manchester, removed from their somewhat dingy premises to a new and more commodious building, erected in Grosvenor Street East, and adjoining the Wesleyan chapel there. A card commemorative of the event was presented to each person joining in the day's proceedings, with the following inscription: "London Road Wesleyan Sunday School, founded in 1785, by John Lancaster, and first conducted by him in a cellar at the corner of Travis Street. It was soon after removed to a room in Worsley Street, built specially for its accommodation, and there carried on until November 10, 1811, when it took possession of the then new schools, situated behind Borough Buildings, and there continued until this day, when it was again removed to the recently erected building adjoining the Grosvenor Street chapel, in commemoration of which event this card is presented to ———. Manchester, September 18, 1870."

hundred persons. August 1, Sunday—We were fifteen clergymen at the old church. August 3, Tuesday—Our conference concluded in much love, to the great disappointment of all." 1784 Age 81

Such are Wesley's brief notices of this momentous conference. Some additional incidents must be added. The war of American independence was now ended, and the day of public thanksgiving had reference to that event. In the morning, at five, Thomas Hanby preached from, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Wesley's text, previous to the almost unparalleled sacramental service, was 1 Corinthians xiii. 1–4. The five clergymen who assisted him were Messrs. Coke, Fletcher, Dillon, Bayley, and Simpson. In the afternoon, the business of the conference was resumed; and, at night, Wesley preached again, taking as his text, "This is the first and great commandment." Altogether, Wesley preached not fewer than eight times during this important session, besides regulating the ticklish and difficult business that had to be transacted.[1]

The "long debate," which Wesley mentions, had reference to the deed of declaration, which must now have the best attention that space permits us to give it.

At an early period of his history, Wesley published a model deed for the settlement of chapels, to the effect, that the trustees, for the time being, should permit Wesley himself and such other persons as he might, from time to time, appoint, to have the free use of such premises, to preach therein God's holy word. In case of his death, the same right was secured to his brother; and providing that his brother's decease occurred before that of William Grimshaw, the same prerogatives were to belong to the last mentioned. After the death of the three clergymen, the chapels were to be held, in trust, for the sole use of such persons as might be appointed at the yearly conference of the people called Methodists, provided, that the said persons preached no other doctrines than those contained in Wesley's Notes on the New Testament, and in his four volumes of sermons.[2]

Thus the matter stood in 1784. According to Myles' Chronological History, there were, at this time, in the United

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, pp. 12, 13.
[2] Minutes of Conference, vol. i., p. 41.

1784 Age 81 Kingdom, three hundred and fifty-nine Methodist chapels; and it may be fairly presumed, that most of these were settled substantially according to the provisions of the deed above mentioned.

Here it may be asked, what necessity was there for a further deed? The answer is, that, as yet, there was no legal definition of what was meant by the term "*conference* of the people called Methodists." To supply this defect, Wesley, on the 28th of February, 1784, executed his famous deed of declaration, which, a few days afterwards, was enrolled in the high court of chancery. To use the language of the deed itself, its object was "to explain the words, 'yearly conference of the people called Methodists,' and to declare what persons are members of the said conference, and how the succession and identity thereof is to be continued."

The document proceeds to state, that the said conference had always consisted of Methodist preachers whom Wesley had annually invited to meet him for the following purposes: namely, to advise with him for the promotion of the gospel of Christ; to appoint the said preachers, and other preachers and exhorters in connection with him, to the use and enjoyment of chapels conveyed upon trust as aforesaid; to expel unworthy preachers; and to admit others on probation.

The deed then gives the names and addresses of one hundred preachers, who are now declared to be the members of the said conference; and proceeds to state (1) That they and their successors, for the time being for ever, shall assemble once a year. (2) That the act of the majority shall be the act of the whole. (3) That their first business, when they assemble, shall be to fill up vacancies. (4) That no act of the conference assembled shall be valid unless forty of its members are present. (5) That the duration of the yearly conference shall not be less than five days, nor more than three weeks. (6) That, immediately after filling up vacancies, they shall choose a president and secretary of their assembly out of themselves. (7) That any member of the conference, absenting himself from the yearly assembly thereof for two years successively, without the consent or dispensation of the conference, and who is not present on the

first day of the third yearly assembly thereof, shall forthwith cease to be a member, as though he were naturally dead. (8) That the conference shall and may expel any member thereof, or any person admitted into connection therewith, for any cause which to the conference may seem fit or necessary. (9) That they may admit into connection with them any person, of whom they approve, to be preachers of God's holy word, under the care and direction of the conference. (10) That no person shall be elected a member of the conference, who has not been admitted into connection with the conference, as a preacher, for twelve months. (11) That the conference shall not appoint any person to the use of a chapel or chapels, who is not either a member of the conference, or admitted into connection with the same, or upon trial; and that no person shall be appointed for more than three years successively, except ordained ministers of the Church of England. (12) That the conference may appoint the place of holding the yearly assembly thereof, at any other town, or city, than London, Bristol, or Leeds. (13) That the conference may, when it shall seem expedient, send any of its members as delegates to Ireland, or other parts out of the kingdom of Great Britain, to act on its behalf, and with all the powers of the conference itself. (14) That all resolutions and acts whatsoever of the conference shall be written in the journals of the conference, and be signed by the president and secretary thereof for the time being. (15) That whenever the conference shall be reduced under the number of forty members, and continue so reduced for three years successively; or whenever the members thereof shall decline or neglect to meet together annually during the space of three years, the conference of the people called Methodists shall be extinguished, and all its powers, privileges, and advantages shall cease. (16) That nothing in this deed shall extinguish or lessen the life estate of the said John Wesley and Charles Wesley, or either of them, in any of the chapels in which they now have, or may have, any estate or interest, power or authority whatsoever. 1784 Age 81

Such was Wesley's deed of declaration,—a deed recognised in the trust deeds of all the chapels that Methodism builds; and, hence, a deed investing a hundred Methodist preachers

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with the unexampled power of determining, irrespective of trustees, societies, and congregations, who shall be the officiating ministers in the thousands of chapels occupied by Methodist societies at home and abroad, throughout the United Kingdom and throughout the world. We repeat, this is an unexampled power; and the ministers, invested with it, ought to feel, that they have a corresponding responsibility to God and to His church. High is the honour; the responsibility is fearful. If Methodism should ever fail in its duty, or fall to pieces, they, above all men else, must bear the blame.

We purposely refrain from raising the vexed question about the kind of church government, involved in this great settlement; and proceed to notice the history of the deed of declaration, up to the time of its being signed on February 28, 1784.

Mr. Pawson, in his manuscript memoir of Dr. Whitehead, states that, from the year 1750, all Methodist chapels were settled according to the provisions of the model deed that has been already mentioned; but several of the "wisest and best preachers" were not satisfied, and, from time to time, brought up the matter at the yearly conferences, and earnestly urged Wesley to do something more to preserve the chapels for the purpose which the original builders intended. Wesley replied, that the trust deed in itself was quite sufficient; that it had been drawn up by three of the most eminent counsellors in London; and that, even supposing there might be some defect in it, no one would be so mad as to go to law with an entire body of people like the Methodists. Such reasoning failed to satisfy the preachers, especially Messrs. Hampson and Oddie, both of whom, says Pawson, "were men of remarkably deep understanding and sound judgment." At length, Wesley began to yield to the pressure that was brought upon him; and various schemes were propounded to accomplish the purpose upon which men like Hampson and Oddie had set their hearts. One was to consolidate all the chapels in the connexion into a general trust, the trustees to be chosen out of all the large societies throughout the three kingdoms. Another was to have all the chapel deeds brought to London, and deposited in a strong box, to be provided for the purpose; and, in execution of

this project, many were actually sent, and some were thereby lost. All this occurred previous to Dr. Coke's uniting himself with Wesley; and, from Pawson's testimony, we now turn to that of Coke. 1784 Age 81

In his "Address to the Methodist Society in Great Britain and Ireland, on the Settlement of Preaching Houses," Coke relates that, at the conference of 1782, the preachers seemed to be universally alarmed at the danger arising from the want of a legal definition of what was meant by the term, "the conference of the people called Methodists"; and unanimously wished some method to be taken to remove a danger which appeared to them to be pregnant with evils of the first magnitude. In consequence of this, Coke took the opinion of Mr. Maddox, one of the first counsel of the day, and ascertained, that the law would not recognise the conference, without some further definition; and, consequently, that there was nothing to preserve the Methodist connexion from being shivered into a thousand fragments after Wesley's death. To prevent this, Mr. Maddox advised, that Wesley should execute a deed, specifying the persons by name who composed the conference, together with the mode of succession for its perpetuity. Dr. Coke read Mr. Maddox's opinion to the conference of 1783; and the whole conference expressed their wish that such a deed should be drawn up and executed. Coke immediately set to work, and, with the assistance of Mr. Clulow, a solicitor, and Mr. Maddox, the barrister, a draft of the deed was carefully prepared, and submitted to Wesley for his approval. Coke's opinion was, that every preacher, in full connexion, should have his name inserted; and that admission into full connexion should, in the future, be looked upon as admission into membership with the conference. Wesley demurred to this, and determined to limit the number of members to one hundred, and, without any advice from Coke, made his own selections. In this form, the deed was executed; and Coke sent copies of it to all the assistants of circuits throughout the United Kingdom.[1]

We believe that this is, substantially, all that can be said respecting the origin of what has been termed Methodism's Magna Charta.

[1] Drew's Life of Coke, p. 37.

1784 Age 81 What was the result? There were, at the conference of 1783, one hundred and ninety-two preachers appointed to sixty-nine circuits, throughout the three kingdoms. We have no hesitancy in saying, that we think it would have been wise to have inserted the names of the whole of these in the deed of declaration, with the exception of twenty-two, who were still on trial, and not admitted into full connexion. All seemed to have an equal right to this; and, thereby, all would have been satisfied. Instead of this, Wesley proceeded to the invidious task of selecting a hundred, and rejecting ninety-two. It was a perilous experiment; and the peril was augmented by the mode in which the experiment was made. For instance, sixteen were elected who had travelled less than four years; whereas among the rejected were the following.

Thomas Lee	travelled	36 years.
John Atlay	„	21 „
Joseph Thompson	„	25 „
John Poole	„	25 „
William Ashman	„	19 „
Jonathan Hern	„	15 „
William Eels	„	12 „
Thomas Mitchell	„	36 „
Joseph Pilmoor	„	19 „

Besides, where was the fairness of choosing and refusing the following preachers, who, at the time, were colleagues in the same circuit?

Names of Chosen.	*Years standing.*	*Names of Rejected.*	*Years standing.*
Joshua Keighley	3	William Horner	13
Joseph Cole	3	Simon Day	17
Jonathan Cousins	3	Robert Empringham . . .	21
William Green	3	John Hampson, sen. . . .	31
Joseph Taylor	6	John Wittam	16
William Hoskins	1	John Watson	12
William Myles	6	John Hampson, jun. . . .	6
		George Snowden	14
William Simpson	4	Thomas Johnson	31
James Wray	2	Thomas Wride	15
Henry Foster	3	George Mowat	13

Wesley doubtless had a right to make any selection that he liked; but those who were not selected had an equal right to grumble; and we are not surprised that, sooner or later,

not fewer than nearly thirty of the rejected withdrew from the connexion altogether. 1784 Age 81

John Pawson writes:

"Mr. Wesley, designedly or otherwise, left out the names of several of the old and respectable preachers; and these good men were exceedingly grieved and not without reason. Many of the trustees also were alarmed, thinking that we wished to make the chapels our own property; but nothing of the kind was ever contemplated. The one design of the deed, to my certain knowledge, was to prevent any preacher, who might be inclined to settle, from taking possession of any of our chapels. The preachers, whose names were inserted in the deed, so far from being desirous to be distinguished above their brethren, very cheerfully complied with Mr. Wesley's desire, and gave up every privilege granted to them in the deed, except that of electing their own president and secretary, which appears to me to be a matter of little consequence."[1]

There can be no question, that the deed of declaration occasioned great excitement. John Hampson, jun., says:

"Every itinerant had always considered himself as a member of conference; and, hence, when the ninety-one, who were to be excluded, saw the deed, it was with astonishment and indignation. The injustice of the thing stared them in the face; and they found that, in consenting to such a deed, they had consented, that all the affairs of the connexion should be lodged in the hundred mentioned in the declaration; that they should be the lords and rulers of the rest; and should have it in their power to turn any other preacher out of the conference, and tell him he had no business there. The exclusion itself was both an iniquitous and a mortifying measure. But the partiality of it rendered it still more oppressive. Some of the oldest and ablest preachers, in the connexion, were excluded. Many of the selected members were not only deficient in abilities, but some of them, at the time of their insertion in the deed, were only upon trial; while the chief qualifications of others were ignorance, fanaticism, and ductility. Under such circumstances, it is no wonder if the persons excluded thought themselves aggrieved. They were really so, and they made no scruple to declare their sentiments. They sent circular letters, inviting all the preachers to canvass the business at the ensuing conference; and a large number assembled. Many of them were as averse to the deed, as those who had so decidedly opposed it, and had repeatedly execrated the measure, both by letter and in conversation; but they had not the courage to avow their sentiments in conference. Mr. Wesley made a speech, and invited all who were of his mind to stand up. They all rose to a man. The five were found guilty, and it was unanimously determined, that they should either make concessions or be dismissed. Urged by the entreaties of Mr. Fletcher, and anxious for

[1] Manuscript memoir of Whitehead.

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the restoration of peace, the preachers in the opposition apologised to Mr. Wesley, for printing the circular letter, without having first appealed to conference."[1]

Such, in substance, and omitting acrid comments, is the account given by John Hampson, jun.; and there can be little doubt that, in the main, it is quite correct. The printed circular he mentions was issued by his father, and was entitled, "An Appeal to the Reverend John and Charles Wesley; to all the preachers who act in connection with them; and to every member of their respective societies in England, Scotland, Ireland, and America."[2] Another circular was drawn up by James Oddie, in the form of a petition to Wesley and the legalised conference, to the effect, that the preachers, whose names had been inserted in the deed, would sign an agreement that, at the death of Wesley, they would refrain from taking any advantage of their position, but would invite the excluded to their first conference, and would treat them, in all respects, as equals. This was first suggested by Robert Oastler, of Thirsk; and was widely circulated, and received with favour;[3] and, perhaps, it was this that evoked the following letter, which was written on April 7, 1785, and entrusted to Joseph Bradford, to deliver to the conference, at their first meeting after the writer's death.

"MY DEAR BRETHREN,—Some of our travelling preachers have expressed a fear, that, after my decease, you would exclude them, either from preaching in connection with you, or from some other privileges which they now enjoy. I know no other way to prevent any such inconvenience, than to leave these my last words with you.

"I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you never avail yourselves of the deed of declaration, to assume any superiority over your brethren; but let all things go on, among those itinerants who choose to remain together, exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit.

"In particular, I beseech you, if you ever loved me, and if you now love God and your brethren, to have no respect of persons in stationing the preachers, in choosing children for Kingswood school, in disposing of the yearly contribution and the preachers' fund, or any other of the public money; but do all things with a single eye, as I have done from the

[1] Hampson's Life of Wesley.
[2] Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i., p. 523.
[3] Manuscript.

beginning. Go on thus, doing all things without prejudice or partiality, and God will be with you even to the end. 1784

"JOHN WESLEY."[1] Age 81

This was a serious crisis in the history of Methodism. Fortunately, it passed over without any other immediate consequences than the retirement of the five principal opponents to the deed of declaration, namely, the two Hampsons, Joseph Pilmoor, William Eels, and John Atlay. Considerable excitement, however, existed; and, in the spring of 1785, Wesley found it desirable to write his "Thoughts upon some late Occurrences." He gives the history of the origin of his conferences; and states that the term conference meant not so much conversation, as the persons that conferred, that it had become necessary to define the term, and that, at the conference of 1783, he had been requested to fix the determinate meaning of the word. He accordingly took counsel's opinion how to act, and was advised to execute a deed of declaration. At first, he thought of naming only ten or twelve; but, on second thoughts, he believed there would be more safety in a greater number of counsellors, and, therefore, named a hundred; as many as, he judged, could meet without too great expense, and without leaving any circuit without preachers while the conference assembled. He adds:

"In naming these preachers, as I had no adviser, so I had no respect of persons; but I simply set down those that, according to the best of my judgment, were most proper. But I am not infallible. I might mistake, and think better of some than they deserved. However, I did my best; if I did wrong, it was not the error of my will, but of my judgment.

"This was the rise, and this the nature, of that famous deed of declaration,—that vile, wicked deed, concerning which you have heard such an outcry! And now, can any one tell me how to mend it, or how it could have been made better? 'O yes. You might have inserted two hundred, as well as one hundred, preachers.' No; for then the expense of meeting would have been double, and all the circuits would have been without preachers. 'But you might have named other preachers instead of these.' True, if I had thought as well of them as they did of themselves. But I did not: therefore, I could do no otherwise than I did, without sinning against God and my own conscience.

"'But what need was there for any deed at all?' There was the utmost need of it; without some authentic deed fixing the meaning of the term, the moment I died, the conference had been nothing. Therefore, any of

[1] Myles' History, p. 201.

1784 Age 81

the proprietors of the land on which our preaching houses were built might have seized them for their own use; and there would have been none to hinder them; for the conference would have been nobody, a mere empty name.

"You see then, in all the pains I have taken about this absolutely necessary deed, I have been labouring, not for myself (I have no interest therein), but for the whole body of Methodists; in order to fix them upon such a foundation as is likely to stand as long as the sun and moon endure. That is, if they continue to walk by faith, and to show forth their faith by their works; otherwise, I pray God to root out the memorial of them from the earth.

"JOHN WESLEY.[1]

"PLYMOUTH DOCK, *March* 3, 1785."

We have done. All the facts, within our knowledge, have been given. The reader must form his own opinion. Comment would be easy; but we purposely refrain; only adding, that, by Wesley's famous deed of declaration, the Methodist conference became a legally incorporated institution; and that, without this, the Methodist itinerancy must have ceased, and Methodism itself have been broken up into congregational churches.

We must now advert to another matter, which, if not of equal, was of great importance, namely, the episcopal organisation of the Methodist societies in America. This has been the subject of bewildering controversy for more than eighty years. Wesley and Coke have been bitterly assailed, and as warmly defended. We will narrate the facts as simply and briefly as we can.

During the American war, which was now ended, the American Methodists had multiplied with marvellous rapidity. In 1774, they numbered 2073; in 1784, they were 14,988; showing an increase of 12,915. They had 46 circuits, and 83 itinerant, besides some hundreds of local preachers.[2] All these, so far as the sacraments were concerned, were as sheep without shepherds. Some of the clergymen of the Church of England had taken military commissions in the army; others were destitute of both piety and sense; and nearly all opposed and persecuted the Methodists to the utmost of their power. Bishop White testified, that "the Church of

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1785, p. 269.

[2] American minutes.

England was becoming more and more unpopular,—with some, because it was not considered as promoting piety,— and with others, because they thought the provision for it a useless burden on the community." At the termination of the revolutionary struggle, says Dr. Hawks, himself a clergyman, "a large number of the churches in Virginia were destroyed or irreparably injured; twenty-three of her ninety-five parishes were extinct or forsaken; and of the remaining seventy-two, thirty-four were destitute of ministerial services; while of her ninety-eight clergymen, only twenty-eight remained." The Rev. Mr. Jarratt, another clergyman of the Church of England, stated, that "most of the clergy preached what was little better than deism," and were bitter revilers and persecutors of those who preached the truth.[1] 1784 Age 81

Under these circumstances, the Methodists demanded of their preachers the administration of the sacraments. Many of the societies had been months, some of them years, without these sacred ordinances. Five years before this, in 1779, the preachers in the south proceeded to ordain themselves by the hands of three of their senior members, unwilling that their people should longer be denied the Lord's supper, and their children and probationary members the rite of baptism. Asbury was greatly annoyed at this, and, a year afterwards, with difficulty succeeded in persuading them to suspend the administration of the sacraments till further advice could be received from Wesley.[2] Asbury wrote to Wesley, telling him of the greatness of the work, and of the division that had taken place in Virginia, on account of the people's uneasiness respecting the sacraments. Thousands of their children were unbaptized, and the members of the societies, in general, had not partaken of the Lord's supper for many years.[3] "Dear sir," says he, on March 20, 1784, "we are greatly in need of help. A minister, and such preachers as you can fully recommend, will be very acceptable. Without your recommendation, we shall receive none. But nothing is so pleasing

[1] Bangs' "Original Church of Christ," p. 114.
[2] Stevens' History of Methodism, vol. ii., p. 212.
[3] Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 326.

1784 to me, sir, as the thought of seeing you here; which is the
Age 81 ardent desire of thousands more in America."[1]

Wesley's going was impossible. He had tried (as we have already seen) to induce Bishop Lowth to ordain a minister, and had failed. What else remained? He thought of Dr. Coke, who replied as follows.

"NEAR DUBLIN, *April* 17, 1784.

"HONOURED AND VERY DEAR SIR,—I intended to trouble you no more about my going to America; but your observations incline me to address you again on the subject.

"If some one, in whom you could place the fullest confidence, and whom you think likely to have sufficient influence and prudence and delicacy of conduct for the purpose, were to go over and return, you would then have a source of sufficient information to determine on any points or propositions. I may be destitute of the last mentioned essential qualification (to the former I lay claim without reserve); otherwise my taking such a voyage might be expedient.

"By this means, you might have fuller information concerning the state of the country and the societies than epistolary correspondence can give you; and there might be a cement of union, remaining after your death, between the societies and preachers of the two countries. If the awful event of your decease should happen before my removal to the world of spirits, it is almost certain, that I should have business enough, of indispensable importance, on my hands in these kingdoms.

"I am, dear sir, your most dutiful and most affectionate son,

"THOMAS COKE."[2]

This is a curiously expressed letter; but if it means anything, it means, that if Wesley would be good enough to think and say, that Coke had "sufficient influence, and prudence, and delicacy of conduct," he was willing to become Wesley's envoy to the American Methodists.

Here the matter rested, until the assembling of the conference at Leeds. Mr. Pawson, in his manuscript memoir of Dr. Whitehead, relates, that ordination was first proposed by Wesley himself in his select committee of consultation. Pawson was a member, and was present. He writes: "The preachers were astonished when this was mentioned, and, to a man, opposed it. But I plainly saw that it would be done, as Mr. Wesley's mind appeared to be quite made up."

Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey were appointed to America;

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1786, p. 682. [2] Manuscript letter.

and, six days after the conference concluded, Coke wrote to Wesley as follows. 1784 Age 81

"*August* 9, 1784.

"HONOURED AND DEAR SIR,—The more maturely I consider the subject, the more expedient it appears to me, that the power of ordaining others should be received by me from you, by the imposition of your hands; and that you should lay hands on brother Whatcoat and brother Vasey, for the following reasons: (1) It seems to me the most scriptural way, and most agreeable to the practice of the primitive churches. (2) I may want all the influence, in America, which you can throw into my scale. Mr. Brackenbury informed me at Leeds, that he saw a letter from Mr. Asbury, in which he observed that he would not receive any person, deputed by you, with any part of the superintendency of the work invested in him; or words which evidently implied so much. I do not find the least degree of prejudice in my mind against Mr. Asbury; on the contrary, I find a very great love and esteem; and am determined not to stir a finger without his consent, unless necessity obliges me; but rather to be at his feet in all things. But, as the journey is long, and you cannot spare me often, it is well to provide against all events; and I am satisfied that an authority, formally received from you, will be fully admitted; and that my exercising the office of ordination, without that formal authority, may be disputed, and perhaps, on other accounts, opposed. I think you have tried me too often to doubt, whether I will, in any degree, use the power you are pleased to invest me with, farther than I believe absolutely necessary for the prosperity of the work.

"In respect of my brethren Whatcoat and Vasey; it is very uncertain whether any of the clergy, mentioned by brother Rankin, except Mr. Jarratt, will stir a step with me in the work; and it is by no means certain, that even he will choose to join me in ordaining; and propriety and universal practice make it expedient, that I should have two presbyters with me in this work. In short, it appears to me, that everything should be prepared, and everything proper be done, that can possibly be done, on this side the water. You can do all this in Mr. C——n's house, in your chamber; and afterwards, (according to Mr. Fletcher's advice,) give us letters testimonial of the different offices with which you have been pleased to invest us. For the purpose of laying hands on brothers Whatcoat and Vasey, I can bring Mr. Creighton down with me, by which you will have two presbyters with you.

"In respect to brother Rankin's argument, that you will escape a great deal of odium by omitting this, it is nothing. Either it will be known, or not known. If not known, then no odium will arise; but if known, you will be obliged to acknowledge, that I acted under your direction, or suffer me to sink under the weight of my enemies, with perhaps your brother at the head of them. I shall entreat you to ponder these things.

"Your most dutiful, THOMAS COKE."[1]

[1] Whitehead's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 417.

1784 Would it not seem from this, that Wesley had no
Age 81. idea of ordaining any one himself; but, that he intended Coke, who, as a presbyter of the same church, had coequal power, to go out to America for that purpose? There can be no question, that there is force in Dr. Whitehead's critique, that "Dr. Coke had the same right to ordain Mr. Wesley, that Mr. Wesley had to ordain Dr. Coke." Wesley, we think, never intended doing this; but, at Coke's request, he acquiesced.

Of his power to ordain others, Wesley had no doubt. Nearly forty years before this, he had been convinced, by Lord King's Account of the Primitive Church, "that bishops and presbyters are of one order." In 1756, he wrote: "I still believe the episcopal form of church government, to agree with the practice and writings of the apostles; but, that it is prescribed in Scripture, I do not believe. This opinion, which I once zealously espoused, I have been heartily ashamed of, ever since I read Bishop Stillingfleet's 'Irenicon.' I think he has unanswerably proved, that neither Christ nor His apostles prescribe any particular form of church government; and that the plea of Divine right, for diocesan episcopacy, was never heard of in the primitive church."[1] Again, in 1761, in a letter to a friend, he repeated, that Stillingfleet had fully convinced him, that to believe that none but episcopal ordination was valid "was an entire mistake."[2] And again, in 1780, he shocked the high church bigotry of his brother, by declaring, "I verily believe I have as good a right to ordain, as to administer the Lord's supper."[3]

His right to ordain, then, was no new assumption of Wesley, adopted in his old age, or in his imbecility, as some of his critics have alleged. It was a firm conviction of forty years' standing.

Besides, there was another fact, which might have some influence with him, but which none of his biographers have noticed. The Methodists, under the care of the Countess of Huntingdon, stood in the same relation to the Church of England that the Methodists under Wesley did. They *varied*,

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 200. [2] Ibid. p. 223.
[3] Ibid. vol. xii., p. 137.

not *dissented*, from the Church. Recently, however, there had been a formal and avowed secession. Many of Lady Huntingdon's chapels were supplied by ordained clergymen, and, among others, a large building in Spafields, previously known as the Pantheon. This edifice stood in the parish of Clerkenwell, of which the Rev. William Sellon was minister. Mr. Sellon claimed the right of appointing ministers and clerks to the Spafields chapel; also the right of himself to officiate within its walls as often as he liked. He further demanded the sum of £40 a year, in consideration of his permitting two of the Countess's preachers to occupy the said chapel; also all the sacramental collections; and four collections yearly, for the benefit of the children of the charity school of Clerkenwell parish; and, finally, that, for the due performance of these demands, the proprietors should sign a bond for £1000. 1784 Age 8

Of course, the proprietors refused to comply with such demands. Mr. Sellon then instituted a suit in the consistorial court of the Bishop of London, and cited the Revs. Messrs. Jones and Taylor, the officiating clergymen, and both of them ordained, to answer for their irregularity in preaching in a place not episcopally consecrated, and for carrying on Divine worship there, contrary to the wish of the minister of the parish. Verdicts were obtained against them. The question was then removed to the ecclesiastical courts; and was again decided against the ministers of the countess, and in favour of Mr. Sellon, who obtained the name of Sanballat.

This was a momentous matter. Hitherto, Romaine, Venn, and others had preached for the countess; but now, as ordained clergymen, in danger of prosecution, they had to withdraw their services; and some of the most important chapels were left without supplies. The crisis was serious. The countess took counsel with her friends; and, at length, it was determined, that Messrs. Wills and Taylor should formally secede from the Church of England, and should take upon themselves to ordain others: both of them had received episcopal ordination themselves, both were scholars and able preachers, and Mr. Wills had married Miss Wheeler, the countess's niece. Accordingly, these two ministers issued an address to the archbishops and bishops of the Church of

1784 Age 81 England, stating that, because they could not, as clergymen of the Established Church, continue preaching to their present congregations, without "knowingly and wilfully opposing the Church's laws," they had resolved to secede peaceably, and to put themselves under the protection of the Toleration Act.

Here then was a formal Methodist secession from the Established Church. But more than this: on March 9, 1783, these two seceding clergymen begun to do what Wesley did eighteen months afterwards,—they held their first ordination. This was in Spafields chapel. The service commenced at 9 a.m., and lasted about seven hours. The names of the six young men, then set apart to the Christian ministry, were Thomas Jones, Samuel Beaufoy, Thomas Cannon, John Johnson, William Green, and Joel Abraham Knight. During the service, Mr. Wills addressed the congregation, and assigned his reasons for believing that he had the right to ordain, namely, that presbyters and bishops were the same order, and that, as he and Mr. Taylor had been ordained presbyters, they had really been ordained bishops, and had as much right to ordain others as any bishop in the land.[1]

Wesley was acquainted with all this, though he never mentions it. For aught he knew, an action might be commenced against himself and the other clergymen preaching in City Road, West Street, and elsewhere, similar to that which had been successfully prosecuted against the Countess of Huntingdon's preachers at Spafields. It was time to look about. He held exactly the same views respecting presbyters and bishops that had been publicly avowed by Messrs. Wills and Taylor; and now, in September 1784, reduced them to practice by proceeding to Bristol, and there ordaining Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey.

Passing by the ordinations of Whatcoat and Vasey, which involve no difficulty except Wesley's churchmanship, the ordination of Coke is a perplexing puzzle. Coke had been already ordained a deacon and a priest of the Church of England; and, hence, his ministerial status was the same as Wesley's. What further ordination was needed? Wesley intended none; but Coke wished it.

[1] "Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon;" and "Authentic Narrative of Primary Ordination in Spafields Chapel, 1784."

Wesley was the founder and father of the Methodists. 1784
There were 15,000 in America whom he had never seen. In Age 81
no sense were these members of the Church of England; for, at the termination of the war, no state church was recognised. What were they? Not presbyterians, not Dissenters, not quakers, not anything, except simple Methodists. They were without sacraments. They wished to have them. As Christians, they had a right to them. But who was to administer? Common sense would have said, the men by whose preaching they had been converted; but here priestly prejudice stepped in, and forbad men, whom God had called to preach, to administer the sacraments, until episcopal or presbyterian hands had been put upon them. Things were brought into a dead lock. The question was, are the Methodist preachers in America to administer the sacraments without ordination? Or shall Wesley or some one else go from England to give them ordination? Wesley, a man of action, decided to send Coke, and Coke consented; but, before starting, he wished to have an additional ordination himself. What was that ordination to be? The only one possible was this. Wesley was the venerable father of the 15,000 Methodists in America. He was not able to visit them himself; but sends them Dr. Coke. The doctor pretends, that it is more than possible, that some of the American preachers and societies will refuse to acknowledge his authority. To remove this objection, Wesley, at Bristol, in a private room, holds a religious service, puts his hands upon the head of Coke, and, (to use his own words,) sets him apart as a *superintendent* of the work in America, and gives him a written testimonial to that effect. This was all that Wesley did, and all that Wesley meant; but we greatly doubt whether it was all that the departing envoy wished.

With the highest respect for Dr. Coke, and his general excellences, it is no detraction to assert, that he was dangerously ambitious, and that the height of his ambition was a desire to be a bishop. Some years after this, Coke, unknown to Wesley and Asbury, addressed a confidential letter to Dr. White, bishop of the protestant episcopal church of Pennsylvania, which, if it meant anything, meant

1784 Age 81 that he would like the Methodists of America to be reunited to the English Church, on condition that he himself was ordained to be their bishop. In 1794, he secretly summoned a meeting, at Lichfield, of the most influential of the English preachers, and passed a resolution, that the conference should appoint an order of bishops, to ordain deacons and elders, he himself, of course, expecting to be a member of the prelatical brotherhood. And again, it is a well known fact, that, within twelve months of his lamented death, he wrote to the Earl of Liverpool, stating that he was willing to return most fully into the bosom of the Established Church, on condition, that his royal highness the Prince Regent, and the government, would appoint him their bishop in India. These are unpleasant facts; which we would rather have consigned to oblivion, had they not been necessary to vindicate Wesley from the huge inconsistency of ordaining a coequal presbyter to be a bishop. Wesley meant the ceremony to be a mere formality likely to recommend his delegate to the favour of the Methodists in America: Coke, in his ambition, wished, and intended it to be considered as, an ordination to a bishopric. This will be clear as we proceed farther. The following are the "letters testimonial," which Coke asked to have.

"To all to whom these presents shall come, John Wesley, late Fellow of Lincoln College in Oxford, Presbyter of the Church of England, sendeth greeting.

"Whereas many of the people in the southern provinces of North America, who desire to continue under my care, and still adhere to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, are greatly distressed for want of ministers to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, according to the usage of the same Church; and whereas there does not appear to be any other way of supplying them with ministers:

"Know all men, that I, John Wesley, think myself to be providentially called, at this time, to set apart some persons for the work of the ministry in America. And, therefore, under the protection of almighty God, and with a single eye to His glory, I have this day set apart as a superintendent, by the imposition of my hands, and prayer, (being assisted by other ordained ministers,[1]) Thomas Coke, doctor of civil law, a presbyter of the Church of England, and a man whom I judge to be well qualified

[1] The Rev. James Creighton was present; but Charles Wesley was not, though he was in Bristol at the time.—(Jackson's Life of C. Wesley, vol. ii., p. 389.)

for that great work. And I do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern, as a fit person to preside over the flock of Christ. In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four. 1784 Age 81

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

"BRISTOL, *September* 10, 1784.

"*To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our Brethren in North America.*

"BY a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from the mother country, and erected into independent states. The English government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the states of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the congress, partly by the provincial assemblies. But no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation, some thousands of the inhabitants of these states desire my advice, and, in compliance with their desire, I have drawn up a little sketch.

"Lord King's account of the primitive church convinced me, many years ago, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years, I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused; not only for peace sake, but because I was determined, as little as possible, to violate the established order of the national church to which I belonged.

"But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops, who have a legal jurisdiction; in America there are none, neither any parish minister; so that, for some hundreds of miles together, there is none either to baptize, or to administer the Lord's supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end, and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order, and invade no man's rights, by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest.

"I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America; as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, to act as elders among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord's supper. And I have prepared a liturgy, little differing from that of the Church of England, (I think the best constituted national church in the world,) which I advise all the travelling preachers to use on the Lord's day, in all the congregations, reading the litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the elders to administer the supper of the Lord, on every Lord's day.

"If any one will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding and guiding these poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present, I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

[1] Drew's Life of Coke, p. 66.

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"It has, indeed, been proposed to desire the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object: (1) I desired the Bishop of London to ordain one, but could not prevail. (2) If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay. (3) If they would ordain them now, they would expect to govern them; and how grievously would this entangle us! (4) As our American brethren are now totally disentangled, both from the state and the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again, either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty, simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church. And we judge it best, that they should stand fast in that liberty, wherewith God has so strangely set them free.

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

"These are the steps," says Wesley in another place, "which, not of choice, but necessity, I have slowly and deliberately taken. If any one is pleased to call this *separating from the Church*, he may. But the law of England does not call it so; nor can any one properly be said so to do, unless, out of conscience, he refuses to join in the service, and partake of the sacraments administered therein."[2]

Eight days after the date of the above letter, Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey set sail for America, where they arrived on November 3. A conference of nearly sixty preachers met in Baltimore on December 24. Three days later, Coke ordained Asbury; and the two then ordained a number of elders and deacons. Coke preached a sermon, which was published, with the title, "The Substance of a Sermon preached at Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, before the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, on the 27th of December, 1784, at the Ordination of the Rev. Francis Asbury to the office of Superintendent. By Thomas Coke, LL.D., Superintendent of the said Church. Published at the desire of the Conference." 12mo, 22 pages.

The title is worth observing. Coke and Asbury are *superintendents;* the Methodist church is *episcopal,*—a church governed by *bishops.* The sermon begins with an onslaught on the Church of England in America. "The churches had, in general, been filled with the parasites and bottle companions of the rich and great. The humble and importunate entreaties, of the oppressed flocks, were contemned and de-

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1785, p. 602. [2] Ibid. 1786, p. 677.

spised. The drunkard, the fornicator, and the extortioner, triumphed over bleeding Zion, because they were faithful abettors of the ruling powers. But these intolerable fetters were now struck off; and the antichristian union, which before subsisted between church and state, was broken asunder." Coke then proceeds to answer the question, "What right have you to exercise the episcopal office?" "To me," says he, "the most manifest and clear. God has been pleased, by Mr. Wesley, to raise up, in America and Europe, a numerous society, well known by the name of Methodists. The whole body have invariably esteemed *this man* as their chief pastor, under Christ; and we are fully persuaded, he has a right to ordain. Besides, we have every qualification for an episcopal church, which that of Alexandria possessed for two hundred years; our bishops, or superintendents (as we rather call them), having been elected by the suffrages of the whole body of our ministers through the continent, assembled in general conference." 1784 Age 81

This is scarcely conclusive reasoning, but it shows that, from the very first, Coke assumed, what Wesley never gave him, the title of a bishop. Five years later, in May, 1789, Coke and Asbury presented an address to Washington, the president of the United States, beginning with the words, "We, the *bishops* of the Methodist *Episcopal* Church";[1] and at the conference of the same year the first question asked was: "Who are the persons that exercise the episcopal office in the Methodist church in Europe and America? Answer. John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and Francis Asbury, by regular order and succession."[2]

This grandiloquent parade of office must not be ascribed to Wesley. He never sanctioned it; he positively condemned it. Besides, even allowing that Coke and Asbury had a right to designate themselves bishops of the Methodist churches in America, what was their authority for pronouncing Wesley the bishop of the Methodist church in Europe? They had none. It was an unwarrantable liberty taken with the name of a venerable man, who had censured the use of such an appellation, and whose humility and modesty Coke would

[1] Coke's Life, by Etheridge. [2] American minutes.

1784 Age 81 have been none the worse for copying. As it was, Wesley was held up to ridicule, and made to suffer, on account of the episcopal ambition of his friends.

We have no fault to find with the American Methodists being called the Methodist Episcopal Church. They have the fullest right to such a designation if they choose to use it; but it was a name which Wesley never used; and to censure him for ordaining bishops is to censure him for what he never did. He ordained a *superintendent;* but he never thought to call him *bishop.* Hence the following to Asbury.

"LONDON, *September* 20, 1788.

". . . There is indeed a wide difference between the relation wherein you stand to the Americans, and the relation wherein I stand to all the Methodists. You are the elder brother of the American Methodists; I am, under God, the father of the whole family. Therefore, I naturally care for you all in a manner no other person can do. Therefore, I, in a measure, provide for you all; for the supplies which Dr. Coke provides for you, he could not provide, were it not for me,—were it not that I not only permit him to collect, but also support him in so doing.

"But in one point, my dear brother, I am a little afraid, both the doctor and you differ from me. I study to be little; you study to be great. I creep; you strut along. I found a school; you a college! nay, and call it after your own names![1] O, beware; do not seek to be something! Let me be nothing, and 'Christ be all in all!'

"One instance of this, of your greatness, has given me great concern. How can you, how dare you, suffer yourself to be called bishop? I shudder, I start at the very thought! Men may call me a knave or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content; but they shall never, by my consent, call me bishop! For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this! Let the presbyterians do what they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better.

"Thus, my dear Franky, I have told you all that is in my heart. And let this, when I am no more seen, bear witness how sincerely I am your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Coke, in his letter, dated August 9, 1784, mentions the "odium" which Wesley was likely to incur by the ordinations which he himself was soliciting; and, with a want of chivalry not to be commended, requests Wesley to acknowledge that the deed was all his own, otherwise Coke would "sink under

[1] Cokesbury college, twice burned down.
[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 70.

the weight of his enemies, with Charles Wesley at the head of them." The apprehension was not unfounded. Charles Wesley knew nothing of the ordinations in Bristol till they were over; but, of course, it was impossible to keep them secret; and great was the excitement which the revelation created. One of the preachers wrote: 1784 Age 81

"Ordination among Methodists! Amazing indeed! Surely it never began in the midst of a multitude of counsellors; and, I greatly fear, the Son of Man was not secretary of state, or not present, when the business was brought on and carried. Who is the father of this *monster*, so long dreaded by the father of his people, and by most of his sons? Whoever he be, time will prove him to be a felon to Methodism, and discover his assassinating knife sticking fast in the vitals of its body. Years to come will speak in groans the opprobrious anniversary of our religious madness for gowns and bands."

Another wrote: "I wish they had been asleep when they began this business of ordination: it is neither *episcopal* nor *presbyterian;* but a mere hodge-podge of inconsistencies." [1]

On April 28, 1785, Charles Wesley addressed a long letter to Dr. Chandler, an episcopal clergyman, who was about to embark for America, from which the following is an extract.

"I never lost my dread of separation, or ceased to guard our societies against it. I frequently told them: 'I am your servant as long as you remain in the Church of England; but no longer. Should you forsake her, you would renounce me.'

"Some of the lay preachers very early discovered an inclination to separate, which induced my brother to print his 'Reasons against Separation.' As often as it appeared, we beat down the schismatical spirit. If any one did leave the Church, at the same time he left our society. For near fifty years, we kept the sheep in the fold; and, having filled the number of our days, only waited to depart in peace.

"After our having continued friends for above *seventy* years, and fellow labourers for above *fifty*, can anything but death part us? I can scarcely yet believe it, that, in his eighty-second year, my brother, my old, intimate friend and companion, should have assumed the episcopal character, ordained elders, consecrated a bishop, and sent him to ordain our lay preachers in America! I was then in Bristol, at his elbow; yet he never gave me the least hint of his intention. How was he surprised into so rash an action? He certainly persuaded himself that it was right.

"Lord Mansfield told me last year, that ordination was separation. This my brother does not and will not see; or that he has renounced the

[1] Whitehead's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 419.

1784 principles and practice of his whole life; that he has acted contrary to all
Age 81 his declarations, protestations, and writings; robbed his friends of their boasting; and left an indelible blot on his name, as long as it shall be remembered!

"Thus our partnership here is dissolved, but not our friendship. I have taken him for better for worse, till death do us part; or, rather, reunite us in love inseparable. I have lived on earth a little too long, who have lived to see this evil day. But I shall very soon be taken from it, in stedfast faith, that the Lord will maintain His own cause. and carry on His own work, and fulfil His promise to His church, 'Lo, I am with you always, even to the end!'

"What will become of these poor sheep in the wilderness, the American Methodists? How have they been betrayed into a separation from the Church of England, which their preachers and they no more intended than the Methodists here! Had they had patience a little longer, they would have seen a real bishop in America, consecrated by three Scotch bishops, who have their consecration from the English bishops, and are acknowledged by them as the same with themselves. There is, therefore, not the least difference betwixt the members of Bishop Seabury's[1] church, and the members of the Church of England. He told me he looked upon the Methodists in America as sound members of the Church, and was ready to ordain any of their preachers whom he should find duly qualified. His ordination would be indeed genuine, valid, and episcopal. But what are your poor Methodists now? Only a new sect of presbyterians. And, after my brother's death, which is now so near, what will be their end? They will lose all their influence and importance; they will turn aside to vain janglings; they will settle again upon their lees; and, like other sects of Dissenters, come to nothing."[2]

[1] Dr. Samuel Seabury was a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. After the ratification of the treaty of peace, the American episcopal church felt it necessary, not to remain dependent on the good offices of a prelate residing in England, but to have bishops of its own. Accordingly, the clergy in Connecticut assembled in a voluntary convention, and elected Seabury. The election was easily accomplished; the *consecration* was more difficult. Seabury came to England, asking of the archbishops of the English Church a boon which, for a hundred and fifty years, had been asked in vain, namely, that episcopalians in America might have ordained bishops of their own. At the time, the see of Canterbury was vacant; and the archbishop of York was unable to take measures for the consecration of an American citizen, without the authority of parliament. A long delay was unavoidable, and, under the circumstances, Seabury proceeded to Scotland, where he applied for consecration to the bishops of the Scottish episcopal church, His application was granted, and he was solemnly ordained at Aberdeen. on November 14, 1784, by the bishops of Aberdeen, Ross, and Moray.—(Caswall's American Church, p. 124.) This will explain the meaning of C. Wesley's letter; but is it surprising that, amid all these changes, difficulties, and confusions, Wesley took upon himself to ordain deacons and presbyters for the abandoned Methodists of America?

[2] Jackson's Life of C. Wesley, vol. ii., p. 392.

Charles Wesley hints, that his brother was "*surprised* into the rash act" of ordaining. Perhaps he was; but did he afterwards regret it? In answering this question, we must use materials which properly belong to succeeding years.[1] 1784 Age 81

It is a fact, which cannot be denied, that, while Wesley himself was, to some extent, welcomed in Scotland, by the ministers of the kirk, the Methodists, in many instances, were substantially in the same position as the Methodists in America. There were, indeed, clergymen of the English Church in Scotland; but several of them absolutely refused to admit the Methodists to the sacraments, except on the condition that they would renounce all future connection with the Methodist ministry and discipline.[2] There was, therefore, the same necessity to ordain for the one country as for the other. Accordingly, Wesley, in his journal, writes: "1785: August 1—Having, with a few select friends, weighed the matter thoroughly, I yielded to their judgment, and set apart three of our well tried preachers, John Pawson, Thomas Hanby, and Joseph Taylor, to minister in Scotland." A year afterwards, at the conference of 1786, he ordained Joshua Keighley and Charles Atmore, for Scotland; William Warrener, for Antigua; and William Hammet, for Newfoundland. A year later, five others were ordained; in 1788, when Wesley was in Scotland, John Barber and Joseph Cownley received ordination at his hands; and, at the ensuing conference, seven others, including Alexander Mather, who was ordained to the office, not only of deacon and elder, but of *superintendent*. On Ash Wednesday in 1789, Wesley ordained Henry Moore and Thomas Rankin; and this, we believe, completes the list of those upon whom Wesley laid his hands. All these ordinations were in private; and many of them at four o'clock in the morning. Some of the favoured ones were intended for Scotland; some for foreign missions;

[1] The Rev. James Creighton, in his reply to Bradburn's pamphlet in 1793, affirms that Wesley repented, with tears, that he had ordained any of his preachers. He states, that he expressed his sorrow for this at the conference of 1789, and occasionally afterwards till his death. Creighton adds: "About six weeks before he died, he said, 'The preachers are now too powerful for me.'". This must pass for as much as it is worth; James Creighton was a clergyman.

[2] Jackson's Life of C. Wesley, vol. ii., p. 382.

1784 Age 81 and a few, as Mather, Moore, and Rankin, were employed in England. In most instances, probably in all, they were ordained deacons on one day; and, on the day following, received the ordination of elders, Wesley giving to each letters testimonial.[1] Wesley justified his ordinations for Scotland thus.

"After Dr. Coke's return from America, many of our friends begged I would consider the case of Scotland, where we had been labouring for many years, and had seen so little fruit of our labours. Multitudes, indeed, have set out well, but they were soon turned out of the way; chiefly by their ministers either disputing against the truth, or refusing to admit them to the Lord's supper, yea, or to baptize their children, unless they would promise to have no fellowship with the Methodists. Many, who did so, soon lost all they had gained, and became more the children of hell than before. To prevent this, I, at length, consented to take the same step with regard to Scotland, which I had done with regard to America. But this is not a separation from the Church at all. Not from the Church of Scotland, for we were never connected therewith, any further than we are now: nor from the Church of England; for this is not concerned in the steps which are taken in Scotland. Whatever then is done in America, or Scotland, is no separation from the Church of England. I have no thought of this; I have many objections against it. It is a totally different case. 'But for all this, is it not possible there may be such a separation after you are dead?' Undoubtedly it is. But what I said at our first conference above forty years ago, I say still: 'I dare not omit doing what good I can while I live, for fear of evils that may follow when I am dead.'"[2]

There is some force in this, so far as it regards Scotland. The Scotch Methodists never professed themselves to be members of the Church of England; in fact, they regarded that church almost with as much abhorrence as they cherished towards the Church of Rome. Hence the following extract from one of Pawson's unpublished letters, dated "Edinburgh, October 8, 1785."

"Dr. Coke intends to be with us on Sunday, the 23rd instant, when we are to have the sacrament again; but Mr. Wesley is against us having it in the Scotch form, and I am well satisfied our new plan will answer no end at all in Scotland, but will prove a hindrance to the work of God. The people generally hate the very name of Prayer-Book, and everything belonging to it, as they have always been taught to believe it a limb of antichrist, and very little better than the popish mass-book. Popery,

[1] Manuscripts; also *Methodist Magazine*, 1867, p. 622.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1786, p. 678.

prelacy, and all such things, they hold in the greatest detestation. They would soon tell us: 'I dunna ken what you mean by these unca inventions. We belong to the gude old kirk of Scotland, and will not join with the whore of Babylon at all.'" 1784 Age 81

In reference to the English ordinations, Mr. Pawson writes:

"Mr. Wesley knew the state of the societies in England required such measures to be taken, or many of the people would leave the connexion, and had the preachers, after his death, only acted upon his plan, and quietly granted the people, who desired the sacraments, that privilege, no division would have taken place.[1] He foresaw, that the Methodists would soon become a distinct body. He was deeply prejudiced against presbyterian, and as much in favour of episcopal, government. In order, therefore, to preserve all that is valuable in the Church of England among the Methodists, he ordained Mr. Mather and Dr. Coke, bishops. These he undoubtedly designed should ordain others. Mr. Mather told us so at the Manchester conference, in 1791.[2] I believe, Mr. Wesley's first thought of ordaining arose out of the bishop of London refusing to ordain a preacher for America; but that he originally intended to ordain preachers for England is what I never could believe; and, with respect to Scotland, he often declared to me, and in the congregation at Edinburgh, that he was over persuaded to it. And, a few months before his death, he was so annoyed with Dr. Coke's conduct, in persuading the people to depart from the original plan, that he threatened, in a letter, to have no more to do with him, unless he desisted from such a course of procedure."

We give this as we find it; and now turn to a deeply interesting correspondence between Wesley and his brother. Within a fortnight after the ordination of Pawson, Hanby, and Taylor, at the conference of 1785, and in which Wesley, Coke, and Creighton took part,[4] Charles Wesley wrote to his brother as follows.

"BRISTOL, *August* 14, 1785.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I have been reading over again your 'Reasons against a Separation,' printed in 1758, and your Works; and entreat you, in the name of God, and for Christ's sake, to read them again yourself, with previous prayer, and stop, and proceed no farther, till you receive an answer to your inquiry, 'Lord, what wouldst *Thou* have me to do?'

"Every word of your eleven pages deserves the deepest consideration;

[1] Manuscript memoir of Whitehead. [2] Manuscript letter.
[3] Manuscript letter. [4] Pawson's manuscript.

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not to mention my testimony and hymns. Only the seventh I could wish you to read,—a prophecy which I pray God may never come to pass.

"Near thirty years, since then, you have stood against the importunate solicitations of your preachers, who have scarcely at last prevailed. I was your natural ally, and faithful friend; and, while you continued faithful to yourself, we two could chase a thousand.

"But when once you began ordaining in America, I knew, and you knew, that your preachers here would never rest till you ordained them. You told me, they would separate by-and-by. The doctor tells us the same. His Methodist episcopal church in Baltimore was intended to beget a Methodist episcopal church here. You know he comes, armed with your authority, to make us all Dissenters. One of your sons assured me, that not a preacher in London would refuse orders from the doctor.

"Alas! what trouble are you preparing for yourself, as well as for me, and for your oldest, truest, and best friends! Before you have quite broken down the bridge, stop, and consider! If your sons have no regard for you, have some regard for yourself. Go to your grave in peace; at least, suffer me to go first, before this ruin is under your hand. So much, I think, you owe to my father, to my brother, and to me, as to stay till I am taken from the evil. I am on the brink of the grave. Do not push me in, or embitter my last moments. Let us not leave an indelible blot on our memory; but let us leave behind us the name and character of honest men.

"This letter is a debt to our parents, and to our brother, as well as to you, and to

"Your faithful friend,

"CHARLES WESLEY."[1]

Five days afterwards, Wesley replied as follows. The line of poetry was his brother's.

"PLYMOUTH, *August* 19, 1785.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I will tell you my thoughts with all simplicity, and wait for better information. If you agree with me, well; if not, we can, as Mr. Whitefield used to say, agree to disagree.

"For these forty years, I have been in doubt concerning that question, What obedience is due to

'Heathenish priests and mitred infidels'?

"I have, from time to time, proposed my doubts to the most pious and sensible clergymen I knew. But they gave me no satisfaction. Rather, they seemed to be puzzled as well as me.

"Obedience I always paid to the bishops, in obedience to the laws of the land. But I cannot see, that I am under any obligation to obey them further than those laws require.

[1] Jackson's Life of C. Wesley, vol. ii., p. 394.

"It is in obedience to these laws, that I have never exercised in England the power which, I believe, God has given me. I firmly believe, I am a scriptural επισκοπος, as much as any man in England, or in Europe; for the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove. But this does in no wise interfere with my remaining in the Church of England, from which I have no more desire to separate than I had fifty years ago. I still attend all the ordinances of the Church, at all opportunities; and I constantly and earnestly advise all that are connected with me so to do. When Mr. Smyth pressed us to separate from the Church, he meant, 'Go to church no more.' And this was what I meant twenty-seven years ago, when I persuaded our brethren not to separate from the Church. 1784 Age 81

"But here another question occurs: 'What is the Church of England?' It is not all the people of England. Papists and Dissenters are no part thereof. It is not all the people of England, except papists and Dissenters. Then we should have a glorious church indeed! No; according to our twentieth article, a particular church is 'a congregation of faithful people among whom the word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered.' Here is a true logical definition, containing both the essence and the properties of a church. What then, according to this definition, is the Church of England? Does it mean all the believers in England (except the papists and Dissenters) who have the word of God and the sacraments duly administered among them? I fear, this does not come up to your idea of the Church of England. Well, what more do you include in the phrase? 'Why, all the believers that adhere to the doctrine and discipline established by the convocation under Queen Elizabeth.' Nay, that discipline is well-nigh vanished away; and the doctrine both you and I adhere to.

"All these 'Reasons against a Separation from the Church,' in this sense, I subscribe to still. What then are you frighted at? I no more separate from it now than I did in 1758. I submit still (though sometimes with a doubting conscience) to 'mitred infidels.' I do, indeed, vary from them in some points of doctrine, and in some points of discipline (by preaching abroad, for instance, by praying extempore, and by forming societies); but not a hair's breadth farther than I believe to be meet, right, and my bounden duty. I walk still by the same rule I have done for between forty and fifty years. I do nothing rashly. It is not likely I should. The high day of my blood is over. If you will go on hand in hand with me, do. But do not hinder me, if you will not help. Perhaps if you had kept close to me, I might have done better. However, with or without help, I creep on; and as I have been hitherto, so I trust I shall always be,

"Your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1786, p. 50.

1784 To this letter Charles Wesley returned the following
Age 81 reply.

"MARYLEBONE, *September* 8, 1785.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I will tell you my thoughts with the same simplicity. There is no danger of our quarrelling; for the second blow makes the quarrel; and you are the last man upon earth whom I would wish to quarrel with.

"That juvenile line of mine,

'Heathenish priests, and mitred infidels,'

I disown, renounce, and with shame recant. I never knew of more than one 'mitred infidel,' and for him I took Mr. Law's word.

"I do not understand what obedience to the bishops you dread. They have let us alone, and left us to act just as we pleased, for these fifty years. At present, some of them are quite friendly toward us, particularly toward you. The churches are all open to you; and never could there be less pretence for a separation.

"That you are a scriptural επισκοπος, or overseer, I do not dispute. And so is every minister who has the cure of souls. Neither need we dispute whether the uninterrupted succession be fabulous, as you believe; or real, as I believe; or whether Lord King be right or wrong.

"Your definition of the Church of England is the same in prose with mine in verse. By the way, read over my 'Epistle,' to oblige me, and tell me you have read it, and likewise your own 'Reasons.'

"You write, 'all these reasons against a separation from the Church, I subscribe to still. What then are you frighted at? I no more separate from it than I did in the year 1758; I submit still to its bishops; I do indeed vary from them in some points of discipline; (by preaching abroad, for instance, praying extempore, and by forming societies'); (might you not add, and by ordaining?) 'I still walk by the same rule I have done for between forty and fifty years; I do nothing rashly.'

"If I could prove your actual separation, I would not; neither wish to see it proved by any other. But do you not allow, that the doctor has separated? Do you not know and approve of his avowed design and resolution to get all the Methodists of the three kingdoms into a distinct, compact body? Have you seen his ordination sermon? Is the high day of his blood over? Does he do nothing rashly? Have you not made yourself the author of all his actions? I need not remind you, *qui facit per alium facit per se.*

"I must not leave unanswered your surprising question, 'What then are you frighted at?' At the doctor's rashness, and your supporting him in his ambitious pursuits; at an approaching schism, as causeless and unprovoked as the American rebellion; at your own eternal disgrace, and all those frightful evils which your 'Reasons' describe.

"'If you will go on hand in hand with me, do.' I do go, or rather creep on, in the old way in which we set out together, and trust to continue in it, till I finish my course.

"'Perhaps if you had kept close to me, I might have done better.' When you took that fatal step at Bristol, I kept as close to you as close could be; for I was all the time at your elbow. You might certainly have done better, if you had taken me into your counsel. 1784 Age 81

"I thank you for your intention to remain my friend; herein my heart is as your heart; whom God hath joined let not man put asunder. We have taken each other for better for worse, till death do us—part? No; but unite eternally. Therefore, in the love which never faileth, I am your affectionate friend and brother,

"CHARLES WESLEY."[1]

Five days later, Wesley replied.

"*September* 13, 1785.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I see no use of you and me disputing together; for neither of us is likely to convince the other. You say, I separate from the Church; I say, I do not. Then let it stand.

"Your verse is a sad truth. I see fifty times more of England than you do; and I find few exceptions to it.

"I believe Dr. Coke is as free from ambition as from covetousness. He has done nothing rashly, that I know; but he has spoken rashly, which he retracted the moment I spoke to him of it. To publish, as his present thoughts, what he had before retracted, was not fair play. He is now such a right hand to me as Thomas Walsh was. If you will not or cannot help me yourself, do not hinder those that can and will. I must and will save as many souls as I can while I live, without being careful about what may *possibly be* when I die.

"I pray do not confound the intellects of the people in London. You may thereby a little weaken my hands, but you will greatly weaken your own.

"I am, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Wesley failed to grapple with his brother's question; or rather he declined. Charles's point evidently was the same as Lord Mansfield's,—"ordination was separation." No doubt this was strictly accurate. Wesley was too keen sighted not to see it; but he was too much a churchman to acknowledge it. He felt himself unable to reply to his brother's argument; and, therefore, really did not attempt to reply at all.

Two brief letters more, and then we quit the subject of ordination. Six days after the date of the above, Charles Wesley replied as follows.

"LONDON, *September* 19, 1785.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I did not say, you separate from the Church; but I did say, 'If I could prove it, I would not.'

[1] C. Wesley's Life, vol. ii., p. 398. [2] Ibid.

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"That 'sad truth' is not a new truth; you saw it when you expressed in your 'Reasons' such tenderness of love for the unconverted clergy.

"Of your second Thomas Walsh we had better talk than write.

"How 'confound their intellects'? how 'weaken your hands'? I know nothing which I do to prevent the *possible* separation, but pray. God forbid I should sin against Him by ceasing to pray for the Church of England, and for you, while my breath remains in me!

"I am, your affectionate brother,

"CHARLES WESLEY."[1]

Again:

"BRISTOL, *July* 27, 1786.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I cannot rest, living or dying, unless I deal as faithfully with you as I am persuaded you would deal with me, if you were in my place, and I in yours.

"I believe you have been too hasty in ordaining. I believe God left you to yourself in that matter, as He left Hezekiah, to show you the secret pride which was in your heart. I believe Lord Mansfield's decisive words to me, 'ordination is separation.'

"Thus I have discharged my duty to God and His church, and approved myself your faithful friend and affectionate brother,

"CHARLES WESLEY."[2]

This is a long, and, we fear, a wearisome account of what, abstractedly considered, was a trivial thing. John Wesley's preachers, being called of God, were as much ministers of Christ, and as much entitled to administer the sacraments of the church, without the imposition of his hands as with it. We raise no objection to the formality; we think it right, and, because of its solemnity, likely to be useful; but to contend that the thing itself is necessary, would be to condemn all the grand old Methodist preachers, who flourished from the year 1795, when their administration of sacraments was authorised by the Methodist conference, to the year 1836, when, for the first time, ordination by imposition of hands was solemnly enacted, and declared to be a "standing rule and usage in future years."

This, however, is not the point in question. The right or wrong, of ordaining, is left to others to discuss. There can be no doubt that, as a minister of Christ, Wesley had as much right to ordain as any bishop, priest, or presbytery in existence; but he had no right to this as a clergyman of the

[1] C. Wesley's Life, vol. ii., p. 398.

[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1867, p. 625.

Church of England; and, by acting as he did, he became, what he was unwilling to acknowledge, a Dissenter, a separatist from that church. Such was the opinion of Lord Mansfield; and such was the argument of Wesley's brother. Wesley refused to acknowledge this; but, feeling the impossibility of the thing, he declined to attempt refuting it. With great inconsistency, he still persisted in calling himself a member of the Church of England;[1] and, as will be seen, to the day of his death, told the Methodists that if they left the Church they would leave him. All things considered, this was not surprising; but it was absurd. Great allowance must be made for Wesley; but to reconcile Wesley's practice and profession, in this matter, during the last seven years of his eventful life, is simply impossible. 1784 Age 81

Much space has been occupied with these recitals; but, remembering that no event, in Wesley's history, has occasioned more controversy than his act of ordaining preachers, it became a duty to give all the facts concerning it within our knowledge.

We now return to the conference of 1784. As soon as its sessions ended, Wesley again set out on his evangelistic ramblings; and, two days afterwards, came to Shrewsbury, and preached a funeral sermon "in memory of good John Appleton." John was a currier, and became a Methodist under circumstances somewhat peculiar, and which are worth relating.

While at Bristol, he happened to go into a church, where the minister preached a violent sermon, which he had already delivered in two other churches, against "the upstart Methodists." Shortly after, he had to preach again in the church of St. Nicholas, but, while announcing his text, was suddenly seized with a rattling in his throat, fell backward against the

[1] Let us suppose John Hampson, not only to have formed societies, different from the Methodist societies, but also to have ordained local preachers to administer to them the sacraments; and let us suppose further, that, despite this, John Hampson still persisted in calling himself a Methodist: and we have a case analogous to that of Wesley. Under such circumstances, would Wesley have admitted Hampson's claim to continued membership among the Methodists? We trow not; and yet this is exactly the sort of claim which he himself makes in reference to the Church of England.

1784 Age 81 pulpit door, rolled down the steps, was carried home, and died. Mr. Appleton was present, and was so greatly shocked with this event, that, when he returned to Shrewsbury, he took a house, in which he fitted up a room for religious service, and began to preach himself. In 1781, at his own expense, he built the Methodists a chapel, which Wesley opened. A more devoted Christian it would be difficult to find than good John Appleton. His labour, as a working currier, was hard; but, for many years, besides preaching every Sunday, he preached twice a week on the week days, and had full and attentive congregations. He died in the full triumph of faith on the 1st of May, 1784.[1]

From Shrewsbury, Wesley made his way, through Wales, to Bristol, which he reached on August 29, and where, a few days afterwards, he ordained Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey. The next month was spent in incessant preaching in the surrounding neighbourhood.

Here we pause to insert two of his remarkable letters: the first to Miss Bishop, the mistress of a boarding school; the second to the Right Hon. William Pitt, now in the twenty-fifth year of his age, and prime minister of England.

"HAVERFORDWEST, *August* 18, 1784.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—It seems God Himself has already decided the question concerning dancing. He has shown His approbation of your conduct, by sending these children to you again. If dancing be not evil in itself, yet, it leads young women to numberless evils. And the hazard of these, on the one side, seems far to overbalance the little inconveniences, on the other. Therefore, thus much may certainly be said, you have chosen the more excellent way.

"I would recommend very few novels to young persons, for fear they should be desirous of more. Mr. Brooke wrote one more, beside the 'Earl of Moreland,' 'The History of the Human Heart.' I think, it is well worth reading, though it is not equal to his former production. The want of novels may be more than supplied by well chosen history: such as 'The Concise History of England,' 'The Concise History of the Church,' Rollin's Ancient History, Hooke's Roman History (the only impartial one extant), and a few more. For the elder and more sensible children, Malebranche's 'Search after Truth' is an excellent French book. Perhaps, you might add Locke's 'Essay on the Human Understanding,' with the remarks upon it in the *Arminian Magazine*. I had forgotten

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1790, p. 636.

that beautiful book, 'The Travels of Cyrus,' whether in French or English. 1784 Age 81

"I always am your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

The letter to Pitt was one such as prime ministers seldom get.

"BATH, *September* 6, 1784.

"SIR,—Your former goodness, shown to Mr. Ellison,[2] emboldens me to take the liberty of recommending to your notice an old friend, Lieutenant Webb.[3]

"On my mentioning formerly some of his services to Lord North, his lordship was pleased to order him £100 a year. But as it has since been reduced, it is hardly a maintenance for himself and his family. If you would be so good as to remember him in this, or any other way, I should esteem it a particular favour.

"Will you excuse me, sir, for going out of my province by hinting a few things, which have been long upon my mind? If those hints do not deserve any further notice, they may be forgiven and forgotten.

"New taxes must undoubtedly be imposed; but may not more money be produced by the old ones? For instance:

"1. When the land tax is four shillings in the pound, I know some towns which pay regularly seven or five pence. Nay, I know one town where they pay one penny in the pound. Is there no help for this?

"2. As to the window tax: I know a gentleman who has near a hundred windows in his house, and he told me he paid for *twenty*.

"3. The same gentleman told me: 'We have above one hundred men servants in this town, but not above *ten* are paid for.'

"4. I firmly believe, that, in Cornwall alone, the king is defrauded of half a million yearly in customs. What does this amount to in all Great Britain? Surely not so little as five millions.

"5. Servants of distillers inform me, that their masters do not pay for a fortieth part of what they distil. And this duty last year, (if I am rightly informed,) amounted only to £20,000. But have not the spirits distilled this year cost 20,000 lives of his majesty's liege subjects? Is not then the blood of these men vilely bartered for £20,000? not to say anything of the enormous wickedness, which has been occasioned thereby; and not to suppose that these poor wretches have any souls! But, (to consider money alone,) is the king a gainer, or an immense loser? To say nothing of many millions of quarters of corn destroyed, which, if exported, would have added more than £20,000 to the revenue, be it considered, 'Dead men pay no taxes.' So that, by the death of 20,000 persons yearly, (and

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1807, p. 472; and Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 36.

[2] Wesley's nephew, an excise officer (Clarke's "Wesley Family," vol. ii., p. 273).

[3] Commonly called Captain Webb.

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this computation is far under the mark,) the revenue loses far more than it gains.

"But I may urge another consideration to you. You are a man. You have not lost human feelings. You do not love to drink human blood. You are a son of Lord Chatham. Nay, if I mistake not, you are a Christian. Dare you then sustain a sinking nation? Is the God whom you serve able to deliver from ten thousand enemies? I believe He is. Nay, and you believe it. O, may you fear nothing but displeasing Him!

"May I add a word on another head? How would your benevolent heart rejoice, if a stop could be put to that scandal of the English nation, suicide!

"The present laws against it avail nothing; for every such *murderer* is brought in *non compos*. If he was a poor man, the jurors forswear themselves from pity. If he was rich, they hope to be well paid for it. So no ignominy pursues either the living or the dead, and self murder increases daily. But what help?

"I conceive this horrid crime might be totally prevented, and that without doing the least hurt to either the living or the dead. Do you not remember, sir, how the rage for self murder among the Spartan matrons was stopped at once? Would it not have the same effect in England, if an act of parliament were passed, repealing all other acts and appointing that every self murderer should be hanged in chains?

"Suppose your influence could prevent suicide by this means, you would do more service to your country than any prime minister has done these hundred years. Your name would be precious to all true Englishmen as long as England continued a nation. And, what is infinitely more, a greater Monarch than King George would say to you, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' I earnestly commit you to His care, and am, sir, your willing servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Methodism was established not only in America, but also in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, though neither of these countries found a place in the conference minutes till 1785. William Black, now a young man of twenty-four, had begun to pray and preach, and had witnessed the conversion of hundreds. Societies had been formed; and quarterly meetings held; and, for three years, Black had devoted himself wholly to the work of the ministry, without being formally recognised as one of Wesley's itinerant preachers. He had encountered no ordinary difficulties in the prosecution of his work. The Rev. Henry Alline, a Calvinist preacher, had

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1850, p. 161.

divided his societies, by sowing the seeds of antinomian error; and Methodist meetings had been illegally disturbed, and broken up, by English soldiers: but, in the midst of all, young Black courageously persevered. He applied to Wesley for assistance; and he himself expressed a wish to come to Kingswood school to fit himself more fully for the Christian ministry. During the year 1784, Wesley addressed to him the two following letters. 1784 Age 81

"INVERNESS, *May* 11, 1784.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am glad you have given a little assistance to our brethren at Halifax, and along the coast. There is no charity under heaven to be compared to this,—the bringing light to the poor heathens, that are called Christians, but, nevertheless, still sit in darkness and the shadow of death. I am in great hopes, that some of the emigrants, from New York, are really alive to God. And, if so, they will every way be a valuable acquisition to the province where their lot is now cast.

"There is no part of Calvinism or antinomianism which is not fully answered in some part of our writings; particularly in the 'Preservative against Unsettled Notions in Religion.' I have no more to do with answering books. It will be sufficient if you recommend, to Mr. Alline's friends, some of the tracts that are already written. As to himself, I fear he is wiser in his own eyes than seven men that can render a reason.

"The work of God goes on with a steady pace in various parts of England. But, still, the love of many will wax cold, while many others are continually added to supply their place. In the west of England, in Lancashire, and in Yorkshire, God still mightily makes bare His arm. He convinces many, justifies many, and many are perfected in love.

"My great advice to those who are united together, is, Let brotherly love continue! See that ye fall not out by the way! Hold the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace! Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ!

"I am, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

"LONDON, *October* 15, 1784.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—A letter of yours, some time ago, gave me hopes of meeting you in England; as you seemed desirous of spending some time here, to improve yourself in learning. But, as you have now entered into a different state, I do not expect we shall meet in this world. But you have a large field of action where you are, without wandering into Europe. Your present parish is wide enough, namely, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. I do not advise you to go any farther. In the United States, there are abundance of preachers. They can spare four

[1] Black's Memoirs, p. 112.

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preachers to you, better than you can spare one to them. If I am rightly informed, they have already sent you one or two; and they may afford you one or two more, if it please God to give a prosperous voyage to Dr. Coke and his fellow labourers. Does there not want a closer and more direct connection between you of the north, and the societies under Francis Asbury? Is it not more advisable, that you should have a constant correspondence with each other, and act by united counsels? Perhaps it is for want of this, that so many have drawn back. I want a more particular account of the societies in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. I am not at all glad of Mr. Scurr's intention to remove from Nova Scotia to the south. That is going from a place, where he is much wanted, to a place where he is not wanted. I think, if he got £10,000 thereby, it would be but a poor bargain; that is, upon the supposition, which you and I make, that *souls* are of more value than *gold*. Peace be with all your spirits!

"I am, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Wesley returned to London on October 9, and, nine days afterwards, set out on his usual visit to the societies in Oxfordshire. He then went off to Norfolk; and spent the rest of the year in London, and the surrounding counties. He had a long interview with Pascal Paoli, the great Corsican general. He visited convicts, under sentence of death, in Newgate, preached the condemned criminals' sermon, forty-seven of these unhappy creatures being present, all in chains, and most of them in tears. Burglars broke into his house, in City Road. He met with Simeon, who had been with Fletcher at Madeley, and, for fifty-three years afterwards, was rector of Trinity church, Cambridge. Jottings like these might be multiplied; Wesley's life was full of them. We conclude with an unpublished letter to Henry Moore, who was now at Dublin.

"LONDON, *November* 4, 1784.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am glad you spoke freely to Mr. Collins. He is a good man, but not very adviseable. If he should declare open war in England, he will do little or no harm. Mr. Smyth will not be fond of him, if he preaches at Plunkett Street.[2] There will not soon be a coalition between Arminianism and Calvinism. This we found even in Holland.

[1] Black's Memoirs, p. 126.

[2] The Rev. Edward Smyth was about to become minister of Bethesda chapel, Dublin. The Rev. Brian Collins seems to have been in Dublin at the same time.

"If James Rogers and you keep to the Church still, a few, I doubt not, will follow your example. We made just allowance enough for leaving the Church at the last conference. 1784 Age 81

"I am, with kind love to Nancy, yours affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Besides "The Sunday Service of the Methodists in America," and a tract or two, Wesley published nothing, in 1784, except his *Arminian Magazine*. This was as racy and rich as ever. "The Calvinist Cabinet Unlocked" was continued from the previous volume, and run through the whole of this. Like its predecessors, it contained six original sermons by Wesley himself. In that on Dissipation, he expresses the startling opinion: "There is not, on the face of the earth, another nation so perfectly dissipated and ungodly as England; not only so totally without God in the world, but so openly setting Him at defiance. There never was an *age*, that we read of in history, since Julius Cæsar, since Noah, since Adam, wherein dissipation and ungodliness did so generally prevail, both among high and low, rich and poor." In the sermon on Patience, he gives an interesting account of the way in which he was led to embrace the doctrine of Christian perfection; and observes that, in 1762, there were 652 members of the London society, who professed to have attained to this state of grace. That on the text, "We know in part," is a marvellous production, such as none but a man like Wesley could have written. In the sermon on the "Wisdom and Knowledge of God," as displayed in the history of the church, after giving one of his most interesting accounts of the rise of Methodism, he does not hide the fact, that many of the Methodist preachers and people had not been faithful. Speaking of the first preachers, he says, they "were young, poor, ignorant men, without experience, learning, or art; but simple of heart, devoted to God, full of faith and zeal, seeking no honour, no profit, no pleasure, no ease, but merely to save souls; fearing neither want, pain, persecution, nor whatever man could do unto them: yea, not counting their lives dear unto them, so they might finish their course with joy." But in process of time, "several of the preachers increased in other knowledge; but not proportionably in the knowledge

1784 Age 81 of God. They grew less simple, less alive to God, and less devoted to Him. They were less zealous for God, and consequently less active, less diligent in His service. Some of them begun to desire the praise of men, and not the praise of God only; some, to be weary of a wandering life, and to seek ease and quietness. Some began to fear the faces of men; to be ashamed of their calling; to be unwilling to deny themselves, to take up their cross daily, and endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Wherever these preachers laboured, there was not much fruit of their labours. Their word was not, as formerly, clothed with power; it carried with it no demonstration of the Spirit!" Weighty words these! especially as coming from an old man of more than eighty, one of the keenest observers of facts, himself the founder of Methodism, now nearly at the close of his remarkable career. And equally pungent are his remarks respecting the people. Referring to the causes of Methodist backslidings, he writes: "But of all the temptations, none so struck at the whole work of God, as the deceitfulness of riches; a thousand melancholy proofs of which I have seen, within these last fifty years. I have not known threescore rich persons, perhaps not half the number, during threescore years, who, as far as I can judge, were not less holy than they would have been, had they been poor. By riches, I mean not thousands of pounds; but any more than will procure the conveniences of life." "Having gained and saved all you can, give all you can: else your money will eat your flesh as fire, and will sink you to the nethermost hell! O beware of laying up treasures upon earth! Is it not treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath? Lord! I have warned them: but if they will not be warned, what can I do more? I can only give them up unto their own hearts' lusts, and let them follow their own imaginations! By not taking this warning, it is certain many of the Methodists are already fallen. Many are falling at this very time. And there is great reason to apprehend, that many more will fall, most of whom will rise no more!" If Wesley found it necessary to say this in 1784, what would he have said in 1871?

In the sermons, on Obedience to Parents, and Companionship with the Wicked, the reader will find most valuable

advices, such as none but a long experienced casuist like Wesley has wisdom and confidence enough to give. 1784 Age 81

Further description of the *Magazine*, for 1784, is scarcely needed. The letters and the poetry are quite equal to those in the former volumes; the biographies are rich in Christian experience; the anecdotes quaint and instructive. Extracts from his "Natural Philosophy" are given in every number, and also from Bryant's Ancient Mythology. Benson's Letters on Polygamy run through the whole. The supernatural disturbances at Epworth parsonage are related; and, as if in anticipation of his own death, Wesley tells his readers, that, not "to lessen the honour of the house of God, or infect it with unwholesome vapours, he has left orders to bury his remains, not in the new chapel in City Road, but in the burying ground adjoining it;" and then, to show that "epitaphs ought to be prepared by persons who have some knowledge of grammatical and typographical accuracy; and not be left to illiterate relations, parish clerks, or stonemasons, to the great scandal of the nation in general, and of religion in particular," he gives the following, taken from a tombstone in Arbroath churchyard.

"Here lyis Alexand Peter, *present* Town Treasurer of Arbroth, who died —— day January 1630.

"Such a Treasurer was not since, nor yet before,
For common works, calsais, brigs, and schoir—
Of all others he did excel;
He deviced our skoel, and he hung our bell."

1785 Age 82 WESLEY began the year 1785, by spending five days in walking through London, often ankle deep in sludge and melting snow, to beg £200, which he employed in purchasing clothing for the poor. He visited the destitute in their own houses, "to see with his own eyes what their wants were, and how they might be effectually relieved." Besides preaching in his own chapels, he preached in Spitalfields, St. Ethelburga's, and Stepney churches. As usual, he met the London classes, from which he received, as ticket money, £48 7*s.*, out of which he was paid his quarter's salary, £15.[1] His activity was unabated and marvellous.

He wrote as follows, to Mr. Stretton, in Newfoundland.

"LONDON, *February* 25, 1785.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—If that deadly enemy of true religion, popery, is breaking in upon you, there is indeed no time to be lost; for it is far easier to prevent the plague than to stop it. Last autumn Dr. Coke sailed from England, and is now visiting the flock in the midland provinces of America, and setting them on the New Testament plan, to which they all willingly and joyfully conform. I trust, they will no more want such pastors, as are after God's own heart. After he has gone through these parts, he intends to see the brethren in Nova Scotia, probably attended with one or two able preachers, who will be willing to abide there. A day or two ago, I wrote and desired him to call upon our brethren also in Newfoundland, and leave a preacher there likewise. About food and raiment we take no thought; our heavenly Father knoweth that we need these things, and He will provide; only let us be faithful and diligent in feeding His flock. Your preacher will be ordained. You shall want no assistance that is in the power of your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

At the previous conference, Wesley had appointed William Moore to Plymouth. Moore was an itinerant of ten years' standing, and was dissatisfied with Wesley's deed of declaration; and, instead of serving Wesley, as he had done

[1] City Road society book.

[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1824, p. 307.

formerly, he dissevered the connection. He hired a room, drew away about forty of the Plymouth Methodists, and formed a society of his own. He issued "An Appeal to the Inhabitants of the Town of Saltash," 8vo, 8 pages; telling the people, that he preached none other doctrines than those contained in the articles, homilies, and prayers of the Church of England; that he coveted no man's silver, gold, or apparel; and that he was actuated only by a sincere desire to serve them. Moore was evidently a man of education, courage, and Christian zeal; and might have occupied a superior position among his brethren. But Wesley's seeming partiality, in the constitution of his conference, led to Moore's secession; and here, at Plymouth, he had become a somewhat formidable rival. Wesley was summoned, and, in a most bitter frost, off he went, on February 28, to put wrong things right. Here he spent six days, and left the society "confirmed in the truth more than ever." 1785 Age 82

Leaving Plymouth, Wesley came to Bristol, where he employed a fortnight in visiting and preaching to neighbouring societies.

On March 21, he started off to Ireland, preaching all the way to Liverpool, and, notwithstanding frost and snow, and bitter cold, frequently in the open air. He arrived at Dublin on April 11, and found "two such preachers," James Rogers and Andrew Blair, "with two such wives as he knew not where to find again."

Having spent a week in Dublin, he set out for the provinces. He often preached in churches, and not unfrequently in the open air. Everywhere, with one or two exceptions, the people welcomed him; congregations were large, and societies, in general, were lively. Two months were occupied in this employment. His labours were almost incredible. All over Ireland he went, preaching every day, and often twice or thrice a day, not only in Methodist meeting-houses, but in churches, presbyterian chapels, in factories, in bowling greens, in assembly rooms, in courthouses, in barns, in "sloping meadows," in "shady orchards," in groves and avenues, in linen halls, in churchyards and streets, everywhere, where he had a chance. We know, with certainty, that, minute as are the details of Wesley's journals, he, by no means, mentions every sermon

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that he delivered, and every society that he visited; and yet, in this two months' Irish provincial tour, he records the names of not fewer than between fifty and sixty towns, in which he preached, collectively, about fourscore discourses.

At Prosperous, he found a town built within the last five years, by Captain Brooke, who employed two thousand people in the manufacturing of cotton; a Methodist society of fifty members had been formed; and Wesley preached to two crowded congregations. On his way to Cork, he was met by about thirty horsemen, who escorted him to the city, where he met a society of about four hundred members, considerably more than there are at the present time. At Kinsale, "all behaved well, but a few officers." He adds: "the poor in Ireland, in general, are well behaved; all the ill breeding is among well dressed people." At Limerick, he assisted at a service, in the cathedral, which lasted from eleven o'clock till three. At Killchrist, he was the guest of Colonel Pearse; but says, "the house being full of genteel company, I was out of my element; there being no room to talk upon the only subject which deserves the attention of a rational creature." At Ballinrobe, he visited the charter school, the children of which were ragged and dirty. "The schoolroom was not much bigger than a small closet:" three beds had to serve for fifteen boys, and five for nineteen girls; and five farthings a day were allowed the master for the sustenance of each of the hunger bitten pupils. Wesley was so disgusted with the thing, that he reported the case to the commissioners for charter schools in Dublin.

On June 18, he got back to Dublin, where he spent his birthday, on the 28th, and wrote: "By the good providence of God, I finished the eighty-second year of my age. Is anything too hard for God? It is now eleven years since I have felt any such thing as weariness: many times I speak till my voice fails, and I can speak no longer; frequently I walk till my strength fails, and I can walk no farther; yet, even then, I feel no sensation of weariness, but am perfectly easy from head to foot. I dare not impute this to natural causes; it is the will of God."

Having held the Irish conference he set sail for England, on July 10, leaving, says he, "the work of God increasing in

every part of the kingdom, more than it has done for many years." "Here is a set of excellent young preachers; nine in ten of them are much devoted to God. I think, number for number, they exceed their fellow labourers in England."[1] 1785 Age 82

The following letter refers to the same subject, and is too interesting to be omitted. It was addressed to Miss Ritchie.

"DUBLIN, *June* 26, 1785.

"MY DEAR BETSY,—Our Lord has indeed poured out abundance of blessings, almost in every part of this kingdom. I have now gone through every province, and visited all the chief societies, and I have found far the greater part of them increasing both in number and strength. Many are convinced of sin; many justified; and not a few perfected in love. One means of which is, that several of our young preachers, of whom we made little account, appear to be, contrary to all expectation, men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost; and they are pushing out, to the right hand and the left; and, wherever they go, God prospers their labours. I know not whether Thomas Walsh will not revive in two, if not three, of them.

"Many years ago I was saying: 'I cannot imagine how Mr. Whitefield can keep his soul alive, as he is not now going through honour and dishonour, evil report and good report; having nothing but honour and good report attending him wherever he goes.' It is now my own case; I am just in the condition now that he was then in. I am become, I know not how, an honourable man. The scandal of the cross is ceased; and all the kingdom, rich and poor, papists and protestants, behave with courtesy, nay, and seeming good will! It seems as if I had well-nigh finished my course, and our Lord was giving me an honourable discharge.

"Peace be with your spirit! Adieu!

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

A letter, from Wesley to Mr. Stretton, has been already given, announcing that preachers were about to be sent to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. This was already done; and Freeborn Garretson and James Cromwell were labouring, in the former country, with great success. Wesley, while in Ireland, wrote to Garretson as follows.

"DUBLIN, *June* 16, 1785.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—*I am glad brother Cromwell and you have* undertaken that '*labour of love*' *of visiting Nova Scotia; and doubt* not but you act in full concert *with the little handful, who were almost* alone till you came. *It will be the wisest way to make all those* who

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 143. [2] Ibid. vol. xiii., p. 61.

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desire to join together, thoroughly acquainted with the whole Methodist plan; and to accustom them, from the very beginning, to the accurate observance of all our rules. Let none of them rest in being half Christians. Whatever they do, let them do it with their might; and it will be well, as soon as any of them find peace with God, to exhort them to 'go on to perfection.' The more explicitly and strongly you press all believers to aspire after full sanctification, as attainable now by simple faith, the more the whole work of God will prosper.

"I do not expect any great matters from the bishop. I doubt his eye is not single; and if it be not, he will do little good to you, or any one else. It may be a comfort to you, that you have no need of him. You want nothing which he can give.

"You do not know the state of the English Methodists; they do not roll in money, like many of the American Methodists. It is with the utmost difficulty, that we can raise five or six hundred pounds a year to supply our contingent expenses; so that it is entirely impracticable to raise £500 among them to build houses in America. It is true, they might do much; but it is a sad observation, they that have most money have usually least grace.

"The peace of God be with all your spirits! I am your affectionate friend and brother,

'JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Thus was Methodism spreading. We find it firmly planted throughout the whole of the United Kingdom. Its members in America were counted by thousands. It had its societies in the West Indies. It had taken root in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. And, besides all this, it was beginning to exert indirectly a benign influence on other lands, where, since then, religion has been extensively revived. The Methodist mission to Sweden, begun by Joseph Rayner Stephens, in 1826, was facilitated by Methodist feeling, imbibed from Wesley, in 1785. Hence the following letter, from an aged clergyman of the established church of Sweden, written in 1827, and addressed to Mr. Stephens.

"It affected my heart to see, in the newspapers of Stockholm, that an adherent to the famous and venerable Mr. J. Wesley had established a chapel, for Divine service, in our metropolis. Mr. Wesley was an old acquaintance of mine when I resided in England in the years 1784-86. He was more; he was my dear friend, and with him I agreed in his Christian principles and opinions. I was exceedingly pleased with him, and with his religion of love, joy, and peace. I very often waited on him at his house; and I was several times in company with him in the circle of

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 66.

his friends, where I went to prayer with them. I learned of him, to be a father to the people that might be entrusted to me. I shall never forget the amiable Mr. Wesley. He was so good as to give me a remembrance of him, by a present of one of his writings, called 'An Appeal,' etc., in which he wrote these lines, '*Domino N. S. S. dono dedit Johannes Wesley, circ. Kal. Augusti*, 1785.' He gave me also several other of his Christian pamphlets. I am far advanced in age; towards seventy-six years old: but, if the almighty God grant me life and health, perhaps I may make a tour to Stockholm next summer, when I have done with my catechumens; and then I shall certainly wait upon you, and make one of your auditory.[1]

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While Wesley was forming new friendships, old ones were being severed by death. It was in 1785, that he thus lost two of the most valuable and valued friends that he ever had,—Vincent Perronet, and John Fletcher, the vicars of Shoreham and Madeley. The former was in the ninety-second year of his age, and died, while Wesley was in Ireland, on the 9th of May. Charles Wesley buried him, and preached his funeral sermon. For the last twenty years, he had enjoyed such a degree of fellowship with God as rarely falls to the lot of man in the present world. He lived chiefly in his library; but, when he mingled with his friends, was always cheerful. His favourite study was the fulfilment of prophecy, and the second coming and visible reign of Christ on earth.[2]

While Perronet was the oldest, Fletcher was the most valuable friend that Wesley had. No man had rendered, to Methodism and its founder, the service that the vicar of Madeley had. Compared with the vicar of Shoreham, he was young; but his life was fraught with incalculable blessings to the church of Christ. Only four years before his death, he had married Miss Bosanquet, who, for thirty years, revered his memory, and remained his widow, till the two were reunited in a better world than this. As we have already seen, he was present at Wesley's last conference, in Leeds; and it was chiefly by his almost angelic interposition and services, that the results of that conference were not much more disastrous than they were. His wife was with him, and writes: "O how deeply was he affected con-

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1828, p. 46.

[2] Ibid. 1799, p. 161.

1785 Age 82 cerning the welfare of his brethren! When any little disputes arose among them, his inmost soul groaned beneath the burden; and, by two or three in the morning, I was sure to hear him breathing out prayer for the peace and prosperity of Zion. When I observed to him, I was afraid it would hurt his health, and wished him to sleep more, he would answer, 'O Polly, the cause of God lies near my heart!'"[1]

Twelve months afterwards, this seraphic man expired, some of his last words being: "O Polly, my dear Polly, *God is love!* Shout! shout aloud! I want a gust of praise to go to the ends of the earth!" He died August 14, 1785, having, on the previous sabbath, read prayers, preached, and administered the Lord's supper, in his parish church. Wesley, at the time, was in the west of England, and unable either to see him, or to attend his funeral; but, as soon as possible, he published a sermon in memory of him, taking the same text as his brother Charles had taken at the death of Perronet: "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." Wesley writes:

"I was intimately acquainted with him for above thirty years; I conversed with him morning, noon, and night, without the least reserve, during a journey of many hundred miles; and, in all that time, I never heard him speak one improper word, nor saw him do an improper action. Many exemplary men have I known, holy in heart and life, within fourscore years; but one equal to him I have not known, one so inwardly and outwardly devoted to God. So unblamable a character, in every respect, I have not found either in Europe or America; and I scarce expect to find such another on this side of eternity."

Wesley arrived in London, from Ireland, on July 14; and, on the following Sunday, preached, morning and evening, on the education of children. The next morning, at five o'clock, he met the children of the congregation at City Road, the morning chapel being full of juveniles, and many standing in the larger chapel. The service was unique. When, either before or since, was there such a congregation at such an hour?

Wesley writes: "July 26, Tuesday.—Our conference began;

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xi., p. 334.

at which about seventy preachers were present, whom I had invited by name. One consequence of this was, that we had no contention or altercation at all; but everything proposed was calmly considered, and determined as we judged would be most for the glory of God." The deed of declaration was again discussed; and seventy preachers present signed documents, that they approved of it. Eight preachers left the connexion, including William Moore and the two Hampsons. Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Antigua, for the first time, appeared in the list of circuits. It was declared, that it was improper to sell books, to employ hairdressers, or to talk of worldly things, on Sundays; and that it was entirely wrong to send Methodist children to dancing schools, and for dancing masters to be admitted into Methodist boarding schools. 1785 Age 82

The conference was closed on August 3, and, five days afterwards, Wesley set out for Cornwall;[1] and on September 3 got back to Bristol, where he wrote: "Sunday, September 4—Finding a report had been spread abroad, that I was going to leave the Church, to satisfy those that were grieved concerning it, I openly declared in the evening, that I had no more thought of separating from the Church than I had forty years ago."

Here, and in the neighbourhood, he spent a month. On October 3, he returned to London; and, the next day, set out for Hertfordshire. A week later, he was off to Oxfordshire; and the week after that, to Norfolk. He writes: "October 22—I returned to Norwich; and, in the evening, spoke home to an uncommonly large congregation; telling them, 'Of all the people I have seen in the kingdom, for between forty and fifty years, you have been the most fickle, and yet the most stubborn.' However, our labour

[1] Among other places, Wesley preached at St. Austell, where his host had a little girl, twelve years of age, who had recently been admitted into the Methodist society by Adam Clarke. That little girl is now Mrs. Shaw, aged ninety-eight, and well remembers Wesley taking her, more than once, in his carriage for a drive, and showing her other marks of affectionate attention. Mrs. Shaw—happy, intelligent, and full of faith, —is a mother in Israel, and probably the oldest Methodist now living. The writer has in his possession, in Mrs. Shaw's own handwriting, a beautiful hymn of five stanzas, composed by her, in the month of May, 1869.

1785 Age 82 has not been lost, for many have died in peace; and God is able to say to the residue of these dry bones, 'Live!'"

Querulous and quarrelsome Thomas Wride was, at this time, the assistant in Norwich circuit, and, from a large mass of his manuscripts in the author's possession, the following facts are gleaned. A monument to the memory of Mr. Turner had been erected in the chapel, on which were chiselled certain "doggrel verses," with which Wride was greatly dissatisfied. He had told the society, on September 4, what they might expect from him, in reference to meeting in class, showing tickets, etc.; and says "the terror of his countenance had awed them, and several had owned that they were afraid of him." He had received a quantity of sermons for sale, and, among others, Dr. Coke's sermon, preached in Baltimore, at the ordination of Asbury; which, he says, he is reluctant to put into circulation. He writes: "It amounts to a formal separation from the Church of England, and, in the end, will tear up Methodism by the roots. Whatever may be said of America, I cannot think it right, for us here, to declare ourselves independent of the Church of England, while we enjoy the privileges we have always done. I dread the consequence; for, if we are independents, hardly any will come to us, but such as choose to change their religion; whereas, those to whom the Methodists have been mainly useful had no religion to change." Wride was also dissatisfied with his colleagues; for J. McKersey would sing a hymn between the first prayer and the sermon; and James McByron would permit the congregations to sing anthems. McKersey also refused to preach at five in the mornings; for though, as he said, he could rise soon enough, he was not able to preach till he had had his breakfast; and, in consequence, Wride had advised him to take his breakfast to bed with him. Wride acknowledges, that the Methodists at Norwich had not been used to morning preaching. The rich would not attend; and, as the poor did not begin to work till eight o'clock, and could not afford to burn a fire, they were reluctant to rise so early. Hence, when he himself had preached, his congregation consisted only of his wife and two others. Mr. McKersey, further, had neglected the select band; and had declared he would "rather go twelve miles

than meet the children." Wride multiplies complaints against the leading singers, and against the leaders, Messrs. Booty, Best, James and George Hay, Kilburn, Senior, Flegg, and Johnson; and declares that a preacher, sent to Norwich circuit, ought to combine in himself the qualities of "the lion, the lamb, the dove, the serpent, and the ox." 1785 Age 82

Poor Wride! The contention continued, and, early in 1786, Wesley had to remove him to another post of duty; but, before doing so, he addressed to him the following letters, which have not before been published.

"LONDON, *November* 8, 1785.

"DEAR TOMMY,—James Byron is an amiable young man; at present full of faith and love. If possible, guard him from those that will be inclined to love him too well. Then he will be as useful a fellow labourer as you can desire. And set him a pattern in all things.

"I am, dear Tommy, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

"LONDON, *November* 17, 1785.

"DEAR TOMMY,—Deal plainly, and yet tenderly with James Byron, and he will be a very useful labourer. But none can be a Methodist preacher, unless he is both able and willing to preach in the morning; which is the most healthy exercise in the world. I desire, that none of our preachers would sing oftener than twice at one service. We need nothing to fill up our hour.

"In every place, where there is a sufficient number of believers, do all you can to prevail upon them to meet in band. Be mild; be serious; and you will conquer all things.

"I am, dear Tommy, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

"LONDON, *December* 14, 1785.

"DEAR TOMMY,—Have patience with the young men, and they will mend upon your hands. But remember! soft and fair goes far. For twenty years and upwards, we had good morning congregations at Norwich; but they might begin at six till Ladyday. I desire brother Byron to try what he can do: better days will come.

"I pray, let the doggrel hymn be no more sung in our chapel. If they do not soon come to their senses at Norwich, I will remove you to Colchester. Be mild! Be serious!

"I am, dear Tommy, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Tommy Wride was not the only preacher that gave Wesley trouble. For twelve years, Michael Moorhouse had been one

1785 Age 82 of his itinerants, and had had his share of persecution. In 1778, while preaching in the market place at Melton Mowbray, he was pulled down by a ruthless mob, and, with three other peaceable men, dragged to the Black Hole, where means were used to impress him for the army.[1] Moorhouse now was discontented, and, in 1785, published a broadsheet of sixteen columns, in small type, entitled "An Appeal to Honest Men," and full of petty grievances, particularly with regard to the influence of John Crook and Wesley, and respecting his own appointments to inferior circuits. At the conference of 1786, he left the work; and then embodied the wailings of his Appeal in an octavo volume of 128 pages, with the title, "Defence of Mr. Michael Moorhouse, written by himself." He bitterly complains of Wesley for suffering some of the wives of his preachers to dine on potatoes and buttermilk, while others were pampered with good cheer; and for allowing their husbands to wear great coats, and to use umbrellas on a rainy day. The *Monthly Review*, in noticing poor Moorhouse's notable production, quietly remarks: "The labourer is certainly worthy of his hire, but, in adjusting the hire to the labourer, a good deal must depend on the workman's skill; and, if we are to judge of Master Michael Moorhouse's preaching abilities, from his illiterate and silly performance, we do not see how his master could have afforded him higher wages: perhaps he might fare better, if he were to return to his lawful occupation."

These were among the petty annoyances of Wesley's busy life. He had, in all conscience, enough to do without these; but, in his position, such vexations were inevitable.

Returning from Norfolk, Wesley spent the rest of the year in London, and in preaching tours through Northamptonshire and Kent.

Before proceeding to notice his publications, it is right to say that, at this time, an important pamphlet of twelve pages was issued with the following title: "Free Thoughts concerning a Separation of the People called Methodists from the Church of England, addressed to the Preachers in the Methodist Connexion, by a Layman of the Methodist

[1] Thomas Dixon's manuscript autobiography.

society." The pamphlet may be taken as an echo of the opinions then prevalent, and a brief account of it may be useful. 1785 Age 82

The writer states, that the arguments, used in favour of separation, are, not that the government, service, and doctrine of the Church are unscriptural, but, that the clergy are not converted men; that Methodism loses many of its members through the sacraments not being administered; that the Church of England is a fallen church; that the time is fully come when the Methodists ought to be an independent body; that the good effects of separation are already seen in the continent of America; and that separation will probably take place at Mr. Wesley's death.

Having endeavoured to refute these arguments, the author proceeds to give his reasons against separation: namely (1) many of the Methodists are zealous for the Church of England, and would be offended; (2) separation implies ordination, which would be a bone of contention, an apple of discord, among the preachers, as to who should be ordainers; (3) these "gownsmen or ordainers would have the government of the body more and more devolved upon them, and, instead of being itinerants, would become resident in one place, the itinerant plan thereby becoming gradually weakened, or continued only by *raw lads* on trial."

The arguments, *pro* and *con*, are given as we find them; and merely to show the grounds taken by the opposing parties in 1785.

Excepting Fletcher's funeral sermon, 8vo, 32 pages, Wesley's publications were only four in number.

1. "A Pocket Hymn Book for the use of Christians of all Denominations." 24mo, 208 pages.

2. "An Extract from the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal, from August 9, 1779, to August 20, 1782." 12mo, 92 pages.

3. "A Call to the Unconverted. By R. Baxter." 12mo, 76 pages.

4. The *Arminian Magazine.* 8vo, 668 pages.

The *Arminian Magazine* contains extracts from Dr. Whitby's Discourses on the Five Points, and from Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem. There are biographical accounts of William McCormick, Martha Rogers,

1785 Age 82 Nancy Bissaker, James Creighton, Ann Roylands, John Pritchard, and many others. There are more than thirty letters, and as many poetic pieces. There is Wesley's sermon on his favourite text, 1 Corinthians xiii. 1–3. Also his sermon on perfection, in which his most matured views, on this momentous subject, are stated with his wonted lucidity. The sermon on Hebrews xiii. 17 is remarkable. The point he endeavours to establish is, that, "It is the *duty* of every private Christian to obey his spiritual pastor, by either doing or leaving undone anything of an indifferent nature; anything that is in no way determined in the word of God." In applying the principle to himself and the Methodists, he asks: "Do you take my advice with regard to dress? I published that advice above thirty years ago; I have repeated it a thousand times since. I have advised you to lay aside all needless ornaments: to avoid all needless expense: to be patterns of plainness to all that are round about you. Have you taken this advice? Are you all exemplarily plain in your apparel? as plain as quakers or Moravians? If not, you declare hereby to all the world, that you will not obey them that are over you in the Lord." Wesley's doctrine may be disputed; but the practical use to which he puts it deserves attention. There are three more of his original sermons—on John i. 47; Philippians ii. 12, 13; and Revelation xxi. 5—which are well worth reading.

1786.

WESLEY spent the first two months of 1786 in London. He went to the House of Lords at the opening of parliament, and heard King George III. read the royal speech. He writes: "How agreeably was I surprised. He pronounced every word with exact propriety. I much doubt whether there be any other king in Europe, that is so just and natural a speaker."

Wesley had a remarkable season at City Road. While preaching, the power of God came down; the preacher broke out in prayer; and the congregation burst into a loud and general cry.

Of his own religious feelings he wrote:

"February 24, 1786.—I do not remember to have heard or read anything like my own experience. Almost ever since I can remember, I have been led on in a peculiar way. I go on in an even line, being very little raised at one time, or depressed at another. Count Zinzendorf observes, there are three different ways wherein it pleases God to lead His people. Some are guided, almost in every instance, by apposite texts of Scripture. Others see a clear and plain reason for everything they are to do. And, yet, others are led not so much by Scripture and reason as by particular impressions. I am very rarely led by impressions, but generally by reason and by Scripture. I see abundantly more than I feel. I want to feel more love and zeal for God."[1]

On February 26, Wesley set out, in a snowstorm, on a journey which occupied more than the next four months. His first halt was at Newbury, where he had "a large and serious congregation;" but where, he says, he passed such a night as he had not passed for forty years, his lodging room being as cold as the outward air. He writes: "I could not sleep at all till three in the morning. I rose at four, and set out at five."

The next fortnight was spent at Bristol and in its vicinity On Sunday, March 5, he went through an amount of labour

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 62.

1786 Age 83 which would have appalled most men half his age. "I read prayers," says he, "and preached, and administered the sacrament to about five hundred communicants. At three, I preached in Temple church; at five in the New Room."

Eight days later, he started off to Scotland, when the roads were blocked up with snow, and the weather intensely cold. More than a week was spent at Birmingham: during which he had another sacramental service, as large as that at Bristol; and preached at Madeley a funeral sermon for the sainted Fletcher, taking as his text Revelation xiv. 1–7.[1] At Lane End, after it was dark, and in a piercingly cold wind, he says: "I was constrained to preach abroad; and none of us seemed to regard the weather, for God warmed our hearts." At Burslem, in the same inclement season, the congregation was such, that the venerable preacher was obliged again to take his stand in the open air. After preaching at Congleton, Macclesfield, and other places, he came to Chapel-en-le-Frith, where a large number had been converted, but who needed discipline. He writes: "Frequently three or four, yea, ten or twelve, pray aloud all together. Some of them, perhaps many, scream all together as loud as they possibly can. Some use improper; yea, indecent, expressions in prayer. Several drop down as dead, and are as stiff as a corpse; but, in a while, they start up, and cry, 'Glory! Glory!' perhaps twenty times together. Just so do the French prophets, and very lately the jumpers, in Wales, bring the real work into contempt. Yet, whenever we reprove them, it should be in the most mild and gentle manner possible."

At Bolton, he had, in his congregation, five hundred and fifty children, all scholars in the Methodist Sunday-school; and it was either now, or soon after, that he preached to them a sermon, from Psalm xxxiv. 11, in which he engaged to use no word of more than two syllables, and literally fulfilled his pledge.[2]

His congregations throughout Lancashire, and the west riding of Yorkshire, were enormous, often compelling him to preach out of doors. His popularity was greater than ever. Churches were offered for his use, and accepted, at

[1] Mrs. Mortimer's Life.

[2] Banning's Memoirs.

Haworth, Bingley, Heptonstall, Todmorden, Horsforth, and York. Persecution had ceased; and everywhere the Christian veteran was greeted with the welcomes of admiring and loving crowds. 1786 Age 83

Leaving York on the 8th of May, Wesley, for the first time, visited the town of Easingwold, where was a class of seventeen members, the leader of which was John Barber;[1] and where a chapel had been built, costing £140, only half of which was paid.[2] To open this was the object of Wesley's visit.

He then proceeded to Scotland, where the Methodists were now really a distinct and separated church; for not only had Hanby, Pawson, and others been ordained, and invested with gown and bands, but sacraments were administered; and, while society tickets admitted to society meetings and the lovefeasts, circular metal tokens seemed to become the badge of church membership, having on one side the letters "M. C.," and on the other the words, "Do this in remembrance of Me." The tokens admitted the owners to the table of the Lord.

On the 1st of June, Wesley laid the foundation stone of a new chapel at Alnwick; and, on the following Sunday, preached three times out of doors, to vast congregations, at Gateshead and Newcastle.

On the 5th of June, he set out southwards. Pursuing his usual route, he came to Hull, a fortnight afterwards, and, at the vicar's invitation, preached twice to immense crowds "in one of the largest parish churches in England." The next day, he rode seventy-six miles, and preached at Malton, Pocklington, and Swinfleet. "Sufficient," says he, "for this day was the labour thereof; but still I was no more tired than when I rose in the morning." Can such a fact as this be paralleled? The day after, he preached at Crowle, and Epworth; and the next day after that, at Scotter, Brigg, and Grimsby. At Louth, for the first time, he saw the people "affected." At Gainsborough, his old friend, Sir Nevil Hickman, was dead; but he made the yard of his house his preaching place. On Saturday and Sunday, June 24 and 25, he preached at New Inn, Newark, Retford, Misterton, Over-

[1] Manuscript. [2] Manuscript letter by Mather.

1786 thorpe, and Epworth, six times, at six different towns, in two
Age 83 days, the preacher himself eighty-three years of age!

He writes: "1786, June 30—I turned aside to Barnsley, formerly famous for all manner of wickedness. They were then ready to tear any Methodist preacher to pieces. Now not a dog wagged his tongue. I preached near the market place to a large congregation; and, I believe, the word sunk into many hearts; they seemed to drink in every word. Surely God will have a people in this place."

Wesley might well speak of the brutal wickedness of Barnsley. Three years before, a man resolved to murder Henry Longden, ran up to him while preaching, aimed a blow which would probably have been fatal, but Longden leaped aside, and providentially escaped.[1] On another occasion, Jeremiah Cocker, while preaching in the market place, was pulled down, dragged through the streets, and pelted with rotten eggs, one of which had a dead gosling in it. Cocker applied to the vicar of Sheffield for protection; the rioters were committed for trial at the Rotherham sessions; but were acquitted, on the ground that, though the preacher was licensed to preach, the spot he chose was not licensed as a preaching place! Here John Barber, a few months before Wesley's visit, was saluted with a shower of stones, was seriously hurt, and was rescued by a friendly quaker, who lived in "Barnsley Folly." At another time, a mob, of some hundreds, assembled with cows' horns, drums, and other noisy instruments, and most effectually prevented the preacher being heard. Mr. Raynor, a currier, having lent his house for preaching, the Barnsley roughs made a bonfire at the door, compelled the congregation to seek egress by some other way, and pelted them most mercilessly with filth of the foulest kind. Such are specimens of the treatment received by the poor Methodists in Barnsley, between the years 1780 and 1786. The society was small, not numbering a dozen members; and they had no preaching room, except Raynor's house, till about 1792, when Alexander Mather secured a small chamber over a weaver's shop in Church Street.[2]

From Barnsley, Wesley went to Sheffield, where he selected

[1] Longden's Life. [2] Manuscripts.

as his text, "It is high time to awake out of sleep"; and an anonymous hearer sent him a letter, saying, that he could remember nothing that he said, except that "rising early was good for the nerves!" Here he spent several days, held the quarterly meeting and a lovefeast, administered the sacrament to six or seven hundred persons, visited Wentworth House, baptized Joseph Benson's infant daughter,[1] and was Mr. Holy's guest. After preaching, crowds were wont to follow him to his hospitable lodging; the streets were lined, and the windows of the houses thronged with eager but respectful gazers, Wesley all the while emptying his pockets in scattering gifts among the poor. A vast concourse of people assembled on the green, at the front of Mr. Holy's house; Wesley walked into the midst of them, knelt down, and asked God to bless them. The place became a Bochim; the crowd wept and literally wailed at the thought of losing him; he prayed again; and then darted into Mr. Holy's dwelling, and hid himself.[2] What a contrast to the reception given to his brother in 1743! 1786 Age 83

His visit to Wentworth House has been mentioned. It is a curious fact, but attentive readers of Wesley's journal will easily perceive, that, as Wesley grew older, he took far more interest in visiting scenes of beauty and historic buildings than he did in the earlier parts of his illustrious career. How to account for this, we know not; but so it was.

Tradition says, that Wesley was accompanied by Mr. Birks, of Thorpe, and that, when they were leaving, Mr. Birks asked Mr. Hall, the steward, if it would be agreeable for Mr. Wesley to pray with the family before he left. Permission was courteously given; the household were summoned; and Wentworth House was none the worse for the prayer which the arch Methodist offered beneath its roof.

From Sheffield, Wesley proceeded, by way of Belper and Derby, to Ilkestone. This was his first and last visit to the last mentioned town, and the circumstances connected with it are worth relating. For many years, the only Methodist in Ilkestone had been a poor old woman. The preachers preached, but, apparently, without effect. At length, the old

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1836, p. 166. [2] Manuscript.

1786 Age 83 woman died, and John Crook resolved to preach a funeral sermon. A large congregation assembled at the front of a public house. Mr. Crook stood upon a stone used by travellers for mounting horses. The sermon was worthy of the Methodist apostle of the Isle of Man; and, at its close, the preacher received a message from the vicar of the parish, requesting him to wait upon him next morning. John went, and was received with kindness. "Sir," said the clergyman, "I heard you preach last night with pleasure; in what college were you educated?" "I never attended college," was the answer. "Sir," rejoined the vicar, "I have heard many of the heads of our universities preach, but I never heard a defence of our establishment equal to yours. You are welcome to my pulpit next Sunday." Crook replied, that he was not ordained; and proposed that, instead of preaching *within* the church, he should preach at the church's door. The proposal was accepted; the vicar published from the pulpit the intended service; the itinerant selected as his text, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned;" under that sermon, the priest was deeply convinced of sin, and next Sunday told his congregation, that he was an earnest seeker of salvation; he learnt that Crook was one of Wesley's preachers, and sent to Wesley an invitation;[1] and here, on Thursday July 6, we find him. He writes: "Though the church is large, it was sufficiently crowded. The vicar read prayers with great earnestness and propriety; I preached; and the people seemed all ear. Surely good will be done in this place; though it is strongly opposed both by the Calvinists and Socinians."

Good was done. Among Wesley's hearers was a joiner, Richard Birch. Wesley's discourse reached his heart. He was converted; and, finding that there was in the town a class of four Methodists, he became the fifth; and, before the year expired, he and his friends built a chapel.

Wesley arrived in London, after an absence of nearly twenty weeks, on July 13. Four days were spent in town, and then he started off again to Bristol, for the purpose of holding his annual conference. He writes:

[1] Memoirs of Rev. H. Taft, M.D., p. 6.

"July 25, Tuesday—Our conference began: about eighty preachers attended. We met every day at six and nine in the morning, and at two in the afternoon. On Tuesday, and on Wednesday morning, the characters of the preachers were considered. On Thursday, in the afternoon, we permitted any of the society to be present; and weighed what was said about separating from the Church; but we all determined to continue therein, without one dissenting voice; and I doubt not but this determination will stand, at least, till I am removed into a better world. The conference concluded on Tuesday morning, August 1. Great had been the expectations of many, that we should have had warm debates; but, by the mercy of God, we had none at all; everything was transacted with great calmness; and we parted, as we met, in peace and love." 1786 Age 83

Separation from the Church was again the great question of the day. From the above extract, taken from his journal, it is evident, that Wesley was more than apprehensive that such a separation would occur subsequent to his decease; but it is equally evident, that he was glad to have it postponed till then. In an unpublished letter to Thomas Taylor, dated February 21, 1786, he writes: "The wise bishop Gibson once said, 'Why cannot these gentlemen leave the Church? Then they could do no more harm.' Read 'no more good,' and it would have been a truth. I believe, if we had then left the Church, we should not have done a tenth of the good which we have done. But I do not insist upon this head. I go calmly and quietly on my way, doing what I conceive to be the will of God. I do not, will not, concern myself with what will be done when I am dead. I take no thought about that. If I did, I should probably shut myself up at Kingswood or Newcastle, and leave you all to yourselves."

"I love the Church," said Wesley to his brother, in letters written during the spring of 1786, "as sincerely as ever I did; and I tell our societies everywhere, 'The Methodists will not leave the Church, at least while I live.'" "Eight or ten preachers, it is probable (but I have not met with one yet), will say something about leaving the Church, before the conference. It is not improbable many will be driven out of it where there are Calvinist ministers."

Such were Wesley's wishes, and such were his apprehensions. Wesley expected eight or ten of his preachers to bring the business before conference. This was done by Dr.

1786 Age 83 Coke, who had returned from his *episcopal* tour in the United States. Mr. Pawson writes:

"Dr. Coke thought, that our public services in the large towns ought to be held in church hours, and was freely speaking in the conference upon that subject, and urging its necessity from the fact that nearly all the converted clergymen in the kingdom were Calvinists. Upon hearing this, Mr. Charles Wesley, with a very loud voice, and in great anger, cried out, 'No,' which was the only word he uttered during the whole of the conference sittings. Mr. Mather, however, got up and confirmed what Dr. Coke had said, which we all knew to be a truth."[1]

This debate seems to have issued in the adoption of a document, which Wesley drew up three days before the conference met.

"In what cases do we allow of service in church hours? I answer:

"1. When the minister is a notoriously wicked man.

"2. When he preaches Arian, or any equally pernicious doctrine.

"3. When there are not churches in the town sufficient to contain half the people.

"4. Where there is no church at all within two or three miles.

"We advise every one, who preaches in the church hours, to read the psalms and lessons, with part of the church prayers; because, we apprehend, this will endear the church service to our brethren, who probably would be prejudiced against it, if they heard none but extemporary prayer."

Considering the character of not a few of the ministers of the Church of England in 1786; remembering the number of pulpits from which were preached Arianism, and especially Calvinism, both of which the Methodists considered "*pernicious doctrines*"; and, further, bearing in mind the scanty provision made by the Established Church for the great populations, these concessions, in reference to having Methodist services in church hours, were really much more extensive than, at first sight, appears.

This was the last conference at which Charles Wesley was present. At its conclusion, he preached from his favourite text, "I will bring the third part through the fire;" and told the congregation, that, after the death of himself and his brother, there would be a split among the Methodists, and not more than a third part of the preachers and of the people

[1] Unpublished manuscript.

would remain faithful to the Established Church. Upon these, however, God would pour out His Spirit more abundantly than ever, and His work would prosper in their hands. "This," said he, "was the case with the Moravians when Count Zinzendorf died. So it was when Mr. Whitefield was removed; and thus it will be with the Methodists." [1] 1786 Age 83

Before the conference was concluded, Charles Wesley wrote as follows to the Rev. Mr. Latrobe, Moravian minister in London:

"My brother, and I, and the preachers were unanimous for continuing in the old ship. The preachers of a Dissenting spirit will probably, after our death, set up for themselves, and draw away disciples after them. An old baptist minister, forty years ago, told me, he looked on the Methodists as a seminary for the Dissenters. My desire and design, from the beginning to this day, is, to leave them in the lap of their mother. The bishops might, if they pleased, save the largest and soundest part of them back into the Church; perhaps to leaven the whole lump, as Archbishop Potter said to me. *But I fear, betwixt you and me, their lordships care for none of these things.* The great evil, which I have dreaded for near fifty years, is a schism." [2]

Other matters were debated at the conference of 1786. The old rules respecting the windows, doors, and pews of chapels were to be strictly observed and kept; and no assistant was to allow collections for a new chapel, "till every step had been taken to secure it, on the conference plan, by a trust deed, a bond, or sufficient articles of agreement." And Wesley concluded by giving the following advices to the preachers. (1) To re-establish morning preaching, in all large towns, at least; and to exert themselves in restoring the bands, and the select societies. (2) Always to conclude the service in about an hour. (3) Never to scream. (4) Never to lean upon, or beat the Bible. (5) Wherever they preached, to meet the society. (6) Not to go home at nights, except in cases of the utmost necessity. (7) Never to preach funeral sermons, but for eminently holy persons, to preach none for hire, and to beware of panegyric, particularly in London. (8) To hold more lovefeasts. (9) To introduce no new tunes; to see that none sing too slow, and that the women sing their

[1] Pawson's manuscripts.
[2] Life of C. Wesley, by Jackson, vol. ii., p. 402.

1786 parts; and to exhort all to sing, and all to stand at singing,
Age 83 as well as to kneel at prayers. (10) To let none repeat the last line, unless the preacher does. And, (11) To inform the leaders, that every assistant is to change both the stewards and the leaders when he sees good; and that no leader has power to put any person either into or out of the society.

Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Antigua were now Methodist circuits, and had, unitedly, nine itinerant preachers, and 2179 members of society. These were Methodist missions, though not designated such. And here let it be remarked, that the Methodist Missionary Society was really founded in 1784. Where is the proof of this?

The following is an exact copy of a printed document, kindly lent by the Rev. G. Mather, and addressed, by Dr. Coke, to "The Rev. Mr. Fletcher, at Madeley, near Shiffnal, Cheshire."

"A Plan of the Society for the Establishment of Missions among the Heathen.

"1. Every person who subscribes two guineas yearly, or more, is to be admitted a member of the society.

"2. A general meeting of the subscribers shall be held annually on the last Tuesday in January.

"3. The first general meeting shall be held on the last Tuesday in January 1784, at No. 11, in West Street, near the Seven Dials, London, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

"4. At every general meeting, a committee of seven, or more, shall be chosen, by the majority of the subscribers, to transact the business of the society for the ensuing year.

"5. The general meeting shall receive and examine the accounts of the committee, for the preceding year, of all sums paid to the use of the society, of the purposes to which the whole or any part thereof shall have been applied, and also the report of all they have done, and the advices they have received.

"6. The committee, or the majority of them, shall have power: First, to call in the sums subscribed, or any part thereof, and to receive all collections, legacies, or other voluntary contributions. Secondly, to agree with any they shall approve, who may offer to go abroad, either as missionaries, or in any civil employment. Thirdly, to procure the best instruction that can be obtained for such persons, in the language of the country for which they are intended, before they go abroad. Fourthly, to provide for their expenses, in going and continuing abroad, and for their return home, after such time, and under such circumstances, as may be thought most expedient. Fifthly, to print the Scriptures, or so much thereof as the funds of the society may admit, for the use of any heathen

country. And, sixthly, to do every other act which to them may appear necessary, so far as the common stock of the society will allow, for carrying the design of the society into execution. 1786 Age 83

"7. The committee shall keep an account of the subscribers' names, and all sums received for the use of the society, together with such extracts of the entries of their proceedings, and advices, as may show those who are concerned all that has been done both at home and abroad; which statement shall be signed by at least three of the committee.

"8. The committee, for the new year, shall send a copy of the report for the past year, to all the members of the society, who were not present at the preceding general meeting, and (free of postage) to every clergyman, minister, or other person, from whom any collection, legacy, or other benefaction shall have been received within the time concerning which the report is made.

"9. The committee, if they see it necessary, shall have power to choose a secretary.

"10. The committee shall, at no time, have any claim on the members of the society, for any sum which may exceed the common stock of the society.

"N.B. Those who subscribe before the first general meeting, and to whom it may not be convenient to attend, are desired to favour the general meeting, by letter according to the above direction, with any important remarks which may occur to them on the business, that the subscribers present may be assisted, as far as possible, in settling the rules of the society to the satisfaction of all concerned.

"We have been already favoured with the names of the following subscribers, viz.

	£	s.	d.
Dr. Coke	2	2	0
Rev. Mr. Simpson, Macclesfield	2	2	0
Rev. Mr. Bickerstaff, of Leicester	2	2	0
Mr. Rose, of Dorking	2	2	0
Mr. Horton, of London	2	2	0
Mr. Ryley, „ „	2	2	0
Mr. Riddsdale „ „	2	2	0
Mr. Jay, „ „	2	2	0
Mr. Dewey, „ „	2	2	0
Mr. Mandell, of Bath	2	2	0
Mr. Jaques, of Wallingford	2	2	0
Mr. Butting, of High Wycombe	2	2	0
Mr. John Clark, of Newport, in the Isle of Wight	2	2	0
Miss Eliza Johnson, of Bristol	2	2	0
Mr. Barton, of Isle of Wight	2	2	0
Mr. Henry Brooke, of Dublin	2	2	0
Master and Miss Blashford, of Dublin	4	4	0
Mrs. Kirkover, of Dublin	2	2	0
Mr. Smith, Russia merchant, of London	5	5	0
Mr. D'Olier, of Dublin	2	2	0
Mrs. Smyth, „ „	2	2	0
The Rev. Mr. Fletcher, of Madeley	2	2	0
Miss Salmon	2	2	0
Mr. Houlton, of London, an occasional subscriber	10	10	0
Mrs. King, of Dublin	2	2	0
	£66	3	0

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"*To all the real lovers of mankind.*

"The present institution is so agreeable to the finest feelings of piety and benevolence, that little need be added for its recommendation. The candid of every denomination, (even those who are entirely unconnected with the Methodists, and are determined to be so,) will acknowledge the amazing change which our preaching has wrought upon the ignorant and uncivilised, at least, throughout these nations; and they will admit, that the spirit of a missionary must be of the most zealous, most devoted, and self denying kind; nor is anything more required to constitute a missionary for the heathen nations, than good sense, integrity, great piety, and amazing zeal. Men, possessing all these qualifications in a high degree, we have among us; and we doubt not but some of these will accept of the arduous undertaking, not counting their lives dear, if they may but promote the kingdom of Christ, and the present and eternal welfare of their fellow creatures; and we trust nothing shall be wanting, as far as time, strength, and abilities will admit, to give the fullest and highest satisfaction to the promoters of the plan, on the part of your devoted servants,

"THOMAS COKE,
"THOMAS PARKER.

"Those who are willing to promote the institution are desired to send their names, places of abode, and sums subscribed, to the Rev. Dr. Coke, in London, or Thomas Parker, Esq., barrister at law, in York."

Such was the first Methodist *missionary* report ever published. On the third page of the folio sheet, from which the above is taken, is the following in manuscript.

"NEAR PLYMOUTH, *January* 6, 1784.

"MY VERY DEAR SIR,—Lest Mr. Parker should neglect to send you one of our plans for the establishment of foreign missions, I take the liberty of doing it. Ten subscribers more, of two guineas per annum, have favoured me with their names. If *you* can get a few subscribers more, we shall be obliged to you.

"We have now a very wonderful outpouring of the Spirit in the west of Cornwall. I have been obliged to make a winter campaign of it, and preach here and there out of doors.

"I beg my affectionate respects to Mrs. Fletcher, and entreat you to pray for your most affectionate friend and brother,

"THOMAS COKE."

A few months after the above report was sent to Fletcher, Coke set sail to America, and returned only in time to attend the English conference of 1785. Henceforward, Christian missions absorbed his time and energies.

It is a well known fact, that Warren Hastings was the first governor general of India; and that, in 1786, his celebrated trial was commenced, and was protracted for nearly eight

years, during which one hundred and forty days were spent in its prosecution. Space forbids further remarks concerning this great event; but the excitement created in England by the affairs of India had, doubtless, something to do with the following correspondence between Dr. Coke and a gentleman in that country. Coke had written to him as early as 1784, respecting the establishment of missions in India, and now his correspondent replied. He sympathises with Coke's proposal, but foresees the arduous character of the undertaking. He writes: "The leading features in the character of the Mahommedans are pride and cruelty, treachery and love of power; and those of the Hindoos, abject servility, cunning, lying, dishonesty, and excessive love of money." "Humanly speaking, the probabilities of converting either the Hindoos or Mahommedans appear to be very small." Reasons are assigned for this, showing the writer to be a well informed and accomplished man. He proceeds to say: "The difficulties are great; greater it may be, in some respects, than were those of the first preachers among the freer and more polished people of the Roman empire. Nevertheless, the same Divine power that then made a few obscure, and, for the most part, unlearned men, triumph over the united resistance of the spiritual, secular, and carnal powers of this world, remains unchanged." 1786 Age 83

Coke answered this long and able letter, on January 25, 1786, and said:

"At present, our openings in America, and the pressing invitations we have lately received from Nova Scotia, the West Indies, and the States, call for all the help we can possibly afford our brethren in that quarter of the world. The high esteem which the government has for Mr. Wesley, I am well persuaded, would procure for us the assistance which you think to be necessary; but Mr. Wesley himself seems to have a doubt whether that would be the most excellent way. In Great Britain, Ireland, and America, we have gone on what appears, at first sight at least, to be a more evangelical plan. Our missionaries have not at all concerned themselves with applications to the civil power. They have been exact in their submission to all its laws, and laid themselves out in the most extensive manner for God. It appears very expedient, that our missionaries should visit the settlements of the Danish missionaries in India, and take every step they can to improve themselves in the language of the people. Mr. Wesley is of opinion that not less than half-a-dozen should be at first sent on such a mission; and, as soon as the present

1786 extraordinary calls from America are answered, I trust we shall be able to turn our thoughts to Bengal."[1]
Age 83

For want of means, India had to be abandoned; but, in the month of March, Coke issued "An Address to the Pious and Benevolent, proposing an annual subscription for the support of Missionaries in the Highlands and adjacent Islands of Scotland, the isles of Jersey, Guernsey, and Newfoundland, the West Indies, and the provinces of Nova Scotia and Quebec;" to which was prefixed the following letter by Wesley.

"BRISTOL, *March* 12, 1786.

"DEAR SIR,—I greatly approve of your proposal, for raising a subscription, in order to send missionaries to the highlands of Scotland, the islands of Jersey and Guernsey, the Leeward Islands, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. It is not easy to conceive the extreme want there is, in all these places, of men that will not count their lives dear unto themselves, so they may testify the gospel of the grace of God.

"I am, dear sir, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Coke commenced his Address as follows.

"*Dearly beloved in the Lord,*—Some time past, I took the liberty of addressing you, in behalf of a mission intended to be established in the British dominions in Asia; and many of you very generously entered into that important plan. We have not, indeed, lost sight of it at present; on the contrary, we have lately received a letter of encouragement from a principal gentleman in the province of Bengal. But the providence of God has lately opened to us so many doors nearer home, that Mr. Wesley thinks it imprudent to hazard, at present, the lives of any of our preachers, by sending them to so great a distance, and amidst so many uncertainties and difficulties; when so large a field of action is afforded us in countries to which we have so much easier admittance, and where the success, through the blessing of God, is more or less certain."

He then explains the openings in the places already mentioned. The address is dated March 13, 1786.[3]

In this way, Methodist missions were fairly started; and, on September 24, 1786, Coke set sail, with Messrs. Hammet, Warrener, and Clarke; Warrener being intended for Antigua; and Clarke and Hammet for Newfoundland.[4]

Messrs. Garretson and Black were already labouring in

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1792, p. 333.
[2] Ibid. 1840, p. 574.
[3] Ibid. p. 577.
[4] Coke's Life.

Nova Scotia, and, to them, Wesley addressed the following letters. 1786 Age 83

"LONDON, *September* 30, 1786.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I trust, before this comes to hand, you and Dr. Coke will have met. I can exceedingly ill spare him from England, as I have no clergyman capable of supplying his lack of service; but I was convinced he was more wanted in America than in Europe. I was far off from London when he set sail. Most of those in England, who have riches, love money, even the Methodists; at least, those who are called so. The poor are the Christians. I am quite out of conceit with almost all those who have this world's goods. Let us take care to lay up treasure in heaven.

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

"*November* 30, 1786.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—You have good reason to be thankful to God that He lets you see the fruit of your labours. Whenever any are awakened, you do well to join them together immediately. But I do not advise you to go on too fast. It is not expedient to break up more ground than you can keep; to preach at any more places than you, or your brethren, can constantly attend. To preach once in a place, and no more, very seldom does any good; it only alarms the devil and his children, and makes them more upon their guard against a first assault.

"Wherever there is any church service, I do not approve of any appointment the same hour; because I love the Church of England, and would assist, not oppose, it all I can. How do the inhabitants of Shelburne, Halifax, and other parts of the province, go on as to temporal things? Have they trade? Have they sufficiency of food, and the other necessaries of life? And do they increase or decrease in numbers? It seems there is a scarcity of some things,—of good ink, for yours is so pale that many of your words are not legible.

"As I take it for granted, that you have had several conversations with Dr. Coke, I doubt not you proposed all your difficulties to him, and received full satisfaction concerning them. Probably, we shall send a little help for your building, if we live till conference. Observe the rules for building laid down in the minutes. I am afraid of another American revolution. . . . . .

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Both the above were addressed to Garretson; the following was sent to Black.

"LONDON, *November* 26, 1786.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—It is indeed a matter of joy, that our Lord is still carrying on His work throughout Great Britain and Ireland. In the time of Dr. Jonathan Edwards, there were several gracious showers in

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 67. [2] Ibid.

1786 — Age 83

New England; but there were large intermissions between one and another: whereas, with us there has been no intermission at all for seven-and-forty years, but the work of God has been continually increasing.

"The same thing, I am in hopes, you will now see in America likewise. See that you expect it, and that you seek it in His appointed ways, namely, with fasting and unintermitted prayer. And take care that you be not at all discouraged, though you should not always have an immediate answer. You know

'His manner and His times are best.'

Therefore pray always! Pray, and faint not. I commend you all to our Great Shepherd; and am your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Wesley's correspondence is so vast, that selection is difficult; but two or three other letters, written in 1786, may be given here. The first was sent to Mr. Lawrence Frost, of Liverpool, with a request that it might be handed to the mayor, and has not been previously published. One of Wesley's preachers had been interrupted while preaching to a large multitude, near the old Fishstones, and Wesley wrote to the chief magistrate as follows.

"*To the Mayor of Liverpool.*

"BRISTOL, *July* 29, 1786.

"SIR,—Some preachers, in connection with me, have thought it their duty to call sinners to repentance even in the open air. If they have violated any law thereby, let them suffer the penalty of that law. But, if not, whoever molests them on that account will be called to answer it in his majesty's court of King's Bench. I have had a suit already in that court, with a magistrate (Heap), and, if I am forced to it, am ready to commence another.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."

The letter was effectual. Ever afterwards, the constables were civil, and wisely let the Methodists alone.

William Simpson was one of Wesley's itinerants, and, at this time, was assistant in the Thirsk circuit, where he had to contend with troubles somewhat different to those at Liverpool, but for which Wesley prescribed as sharp a remedy. In the month of November, he wrote him as follows.

"The Sunday preaching may continue at Jervas for the present. I

[1] Memoirs of Black, p. 158.

suppose the society at Jervas is as large as that at Northallerton; and this is a point which is much to be considered. 1786 Age 83

"You must needs expel out of the society at Knaresborough those that *will* be contentious. When you have to do with those stubborn spirits, it is absolutely necessary, either to mend them or end them: and ten persons of a quiet temper are better than thirty contentious ones. Undoubtedly some of the eloquent men will be sending me heavy complaints. It is well, therefore, that you spoke first.

"I am, dear Billy, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

We must now return to Wesley's journal. A week after the conclusion of the Bristol conference, he set sail for Holland, accompanied by Messrs. Broadbent and Brackenbury. There he mingled with many Christian friends; gave many Scripture expositions in private houses; saw many scenes of beauty; and employed all his leisure hours in writing. On September 5, he returned to London, where he spent two days in preaching and answering letters; and then set off to Bristol, where he continued till September 26, when he got back to London, and naively wrote: "I now applied myself in earnest to the writing of Mr. Fletcher's life, having procured the best materials I could. To this I dedicated all the time I could spare, till November, from five in the morning till eight at night. These are my studying hours; I cannot write longer in a day without hurting my eyes." We should think not! Fifteen hours a day of unintermitting labour in the case of a man eighty-three years of age! "Once or twice," he wrote on December 12, "Once or twice, I have been a little out of order this autumn; but it was only for a day or two at a time. In general, my health has been better for these last ten years, than it ever was for ten years together since I was born. Ever since that good fever, which I had in the north of Ireland, I have had, as it were, a new constitution. All my pains and aches have forsaken me, and I am a stranger even to weariness of any kind. This is the Lord's doing, and it may well be marvellous in all our eyes."[2]

At the beginning of October, he went on a preaching excursion to Chatham and Sheerness. Then he set off to Norfolk;

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., pp. 86, 87.

[2] Ibid. vol. xiii., p. 92.

1786 Age 83 and, on his way back to town, preached Mrs. Shewell's funeral sermon at Barnet. At this period, the father of the late Rev. Dr. Leifchild was the chief Methodist in Barnet, and the doctor himself a little boy. "Upon arriving," wrote this distinguished minister, "he drove to my father's house; and, when the door of his carriage was opened, he came out arrayed in his canonicals. Childlike, I ran to lay hold of him, but my father pulled me back; upon which, extending his hand, he said: 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'"

The next five weeks were spent in London, partly in preaching, partly in meeting classes, and partly in writing Fletcher's Life. The only holiday he took was a trip to Hampton Court, which he pronounced "the finest palace the king of England had:"; but even this was scarcely a holiday, for he preached at Wandsworth on his way back to town. He had a brush with the Deptford Methodists, who urgently requested to be allowed to have service in the Methodist chapel at the same time as there was service in the church. "It is easy to see," he writes, "that this would be a formal separation from the Church. We fixed both our morning and evening service, all over England, at such hours as not to interfere with the Church; with this very design,—that those of the Church, if they chose it, might attend both the one and the other. But to fix it at the same hour is obliging them to separate either from the Church or us; and this I judge to be, not only inexpedient, but totally unlawful for me to do." This style of reasoning can only be harmonized with the enactments of the previous conference, on the supposition that the Church minister at Deptford was not such as Wesley then described.

Wesley concluded the year by preaching from, "Set thy house in order," and, among other things, strongly exhorted the people to make their wills.

Except the Life of Fletcher, 12mo, 227 pages, Wesley seems to have published nothing, in 1786, but his *Arminian Magazine*, 8vo, 688 pages.

The volume bears the same character as previous ones. There are again six original sermons by Wesley: the Church; Divine Providence; Schism; Friendship with the

World; Visiting the Sick; and the Eternity of God. The sermon on the Church was a sermon for the times; and, remembering the agitation among the Methodists on the subject of separation, an extract here will not be out of place. 1786 Age 83

"The catholic, or universal, church is all the persons in the universe, whom God hath so called out of the world, as to be one body, united by one Spirit, having one faith, one hope, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in them all. That part of this great body, of the universal church, which inhabits any one kingdom or nation, we may properly term a *national* church, as the Church of France, the Church of England, the Church of Scotland. A smaller part, of the universal church, are the Christians that inhabit any city or town, as the church of Ephesus. Two or three Christian brethren united together are a church in the narrowest sense. Such was the church in the house of Philemon, and that in the house of Nymphas. A particular church may, therefore, consist of any number of members, whether two or three, or two or three millions. But still, whether they be larger or smaller, the same idea is to be preserved. They are one body, and have one Spirit, one Lord, one hope, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all."

One more extract, from the *Magazine* for 1786, must suffice. Addressing those afflicted with lowness of spirits, Wesley writes:

"1. Sacredly abstain from all spirituous liquors. Touch them not, on any pretence whatever. To others they may sometimes be of use; but to nervous persons they are deadly poison.

"2. If you drink any, drink but little tea, and none at all without eating, or without sugar and cream.

"3. Every day of your life, take, at least, an hour's exercise, between breakfast and dinner.

"4. Take no more food than nature requires. Dine upon one thing, except pudding or pie. Eat no flesh at supper; but something light and easy of digestion.

"5. Sleep early, and rise early. Unless you are ill, never lie in bed much above seven hours. Then you will never lie awake; your flesh will be firm, and your spirits lively.

"6. Above all, beware of anger! beware of worldly sorrow! beware of the fear that hath torment! beware of foolish and hurtful desires! beware of inordinate affection!"

1787
Age 84

WESLEY writes:

"1787. Monday, January 1—We began the service at four in the morning, to an unusually large congregation. We had another comfortable opportunity at the new chapel at the usual hour, and a third in the evening at West Street."

"January 2—I went to Deptford; but it seemed, I was got into a den of lions. Most of the leading men of the society were mad for separating from the Church. I endeavoured to reason with them, but in vain: they had neither sense nor even good manners left. At length, after meeting the whole society, I told them: 'If you are resolved, you may have your service in church hours; but, remember, from that time, you will see my face no more.' This struck deep; and, from that hour, I have heard no more of separating from the Church."

Considering the steps that Wesley had already taken, this is somewhat amusing; as are also the two following letters, written soon after, the first to William Percival,[1] and the second to Samuel Bardsley.

"LONDON, *February* 17, 1787.

"DEAR BILLY,—You cannot be too watchful against evil speaking, or too zealous for the poor Church of England. I commend sister Percival for having her child baptized there, and for returning public thanks. By all means, go to church as often as you can, and exhort all the Methodists so to do. They that are enemies to the Church are enemies to *me*. I am a friend to it, and ever was. By our reading prayers, we prevent our people contracting an hatred for forms of prayer; which would naturally be the case, if we always prayed extempore.

"I am, dear Billy, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

"BIRMINGHAM, *March* 25, 1787.

"DEAR SAMMY,—Brother Jackson should advise brother Ridall,[3] not to please the devil by preaching himself to death. I still think, when the Methodists leave the Church of England, God will leave them. Every year more and more of the clergy are convinced of the truth, and grow

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[1] Percival was one of the itinerant preachers at Newcastle on Tyne.

[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1834, p. 674.

[3] Bardsley's colleagues in Colne circuit.

well affected towards us. It would be contrary to all common sense, as well as to good conscience, to make a separation now. 1787 Age 84

"I am, dear Sammy, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Before proceeding with Wesley's history, we insert another letter belonging to this period. It is now for the first time published, and refers to John Hutchinson, the founder of Hutchinsonianism.

"LONDON, *February* 4, 1787.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—I think Mr. Hutchinson was a man of strong understanding, but greatly obscured by uncommon pride and sourness of temper. He was the twin soul of Dr. Bentley. Many of his remarks I exceedingly approve of. That upon the sin of Uzzah is highly probable. His writings to me are far more agreeable than those of Dr. Harmer;[2] an exceeding pretty writer, who seems to propose Dr. Blair for his pattern. Both the one and the other are quite too elegant for me. Give me plain, strong Dr. Horne. Your letters (as well as your conversation) are always agreeable to, my dear sister,

"Your affectionate friend and brother,

"J. WESLEY."

Wesley was always ready for all kinds of useful work,—reading, writing, preaching, praying, and begging for the poor. Towards the close of his career, especially, he seems to have commenced almost every year by an effort to relieve the miseries of his destitute fellow creatures. Accordingly, at the opening of 1787, five days were spent in traversing the streets of London to obtain subscriptions for this purpose. About two hundred members of his own London society were in great distress; and he hoped to provide for them and for others, at least, food and clothing. He writes: "I was much disappointed. Six or seven, indeed, of our brethren, gave £10 apiece. If forty or fifty had done this, I could have carried my design into execution. However, much good was done with £200, and many sorrowful hearts made glad."

Seven years previous to this, Wesley had preached his first sermon at Newark upon Trent. He was now invited to open a new chapel there; and took coach, for that purpose, on February 9, travelled all night, and arrived next day. On

[1] Manuscript letter in British Museum.

[2] Dr. Harmer had recently published vols. iii. and iv. of his "Observations on various Passages of Scripture."

1787 Age 84 Sunday morning, February 11, at nine o'clock, he preached in the "lightsome, cheerful building"; and again at half-past five in the afternoon; when the mayor and several aldermen of the town were present.

This was a kind of service which now frequently fell to Wesley's lot. On Sunday, February 25, after preaching twice in London, he took the mail coach, and, by travelling all night, arrived at Exeter in about four-and-twenty hours. He then hurried off to Plymouth, and opened a new chapel there. On Sunday morning, March 4, he conducted a service, which lasted from half-past nine to nearly one o'clock; and, in the evening, the throng was such, that, in order to reach the pulpit, he was literally lifted over the people's heads. At five o'clock next morning, the chapel was again crowded; and, at six, he departed by coach, "leaving," says he, "such a flame behind us as was never kindled here before."

Notwithstanding the heavy services of the previous day, he travelled all the way to Exeter in a continuous rain, and again preached "to as many as could possibly squeeze" into the chapel; and says, "I know not, that I ever saw such an impression made on the people of Exeter before."

After this, he proceeded to Bristol, where "the work of God had much increased, especially among the young men," but where, out of sixteen hundred members, only five, or ten, or, at the most, a dozen hearers formed the five o'clock morning congregations. Wesley says, he strongly warned them of their indolence; and, during his stay, the congregations were increased to three hundred; but even this was small, considering the prestige of the place, and the fame of the unequalled minister.

Wesley now was suffering considerable anxiety respecting Dr. Coke, who, with his three missionaries, had set sail, five months before, for Newfoundland, but who, unknown to Wesley, had been drifted to the West Indies. Hence the following, addressed to William Black.

"LONDON, *February* 20, 1787.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—After various unfortunate hindrances and delays, Dr. Coke embarked on board a small brig, in the middle of October, and was, by furious winds, twice beat back into the harbour. They set sail a third time, with a crazy, shattered vessel, on the 18th of

October. We have not heard anything either from him or of him since. I hope you have heard of him in America. 1787 Age 84

"You have great reason to be thankful to God for the progress of His work in Nova Scotia. This is far from being the case in Newfoundland, where poor John McGeary appears to be utterly discouraged; not only through want of success, but through want of the conveniences, yea, necessaries of life. Truly, if I could have supposed, that those who made me fair promises would have suffered a preacher to want bread, I should have sent him into other parts, where he would have wanted nothing.

"I hear very different accounts of the state of your provinces. Is there plenty or scarcity in Nova Scotia, and New England? How does it fare with Halifax and Shelburne, in particular? Do the buildings and people increase or decrease? Public accounts I cannot at all depend upon; but upon *your* word I can depend. Peace be with all your spirits!

"I am, dear Billy, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

On March 19, Wesley left Bristol for Ireland, preaching on the way at Stroud, Cirencester, Gloucester, and numerous other places. At Birmingham, he administered the sacrament to seven or eight hundred communicants. At Wolverhampton, he opened a new chapel. At Burslem, he held one of the most remarkable lovefeasts he had ever witnessed; for here there had been "such an outpouring of the Spirit as had not been in any other part of the kingdom; particularly in the meetings for prayer. Fifteen or twenty had been justified in a day; some of them the most notorious, abandoned sinners, in all the country." He "appointed to preach at five in the morning of March 30, but, soon after four, he was saluted by a concert of music, both vocal and instrumental, making the air ring, with a hymn to the tune of Judas Maccabeus. It was," says he, "a good prelude; so I began almost half an hour before five; yet the house was crowded both above and below."

He writes: "Saturday, March 31—I went on to Macclesfield, and found a people still alive to God, in spite of swiftly increasing riches. If they continue so, it will be the only instance I have known, in above half a century. I warned them in the strongest terms I could, and believe some of them had ears to hear."

He arrived in Dublin on Good Friday, April 6. On Easter

[1] Black's Memoirs, p. 185.

1787 Age 84 Sunday he preached in Bethesda chapel, of which his friend, the Rev. Edward Smyth, was chaplain. He writes: "Mr. Smyth read prayers, and gave out the hymns, which were sung by fifteen or twenty fine singers; the rest of the congregation listening with much attention, and as much devotion, as they would have done to an opera. But is this Christian worship? Or ought it ever to be suffered in a Christian church? It was thought we had between seven and eight hundred communicants."

At this period, the Dublin society, with the exception of that in London, was the largest in the world, containing upwards of eleven hundred members, being more than there were in the whole of the five Dublin *circuits* in 1870!

Having spent ten days in Dublin, he set out for the provinces. It would be, substantially, a reiteration of former narratives, to follow him in his wanderings. He met with no persecution; but, on the contrary, with the warmest welcomes. Almost everywhere the work of God was prospering; and the people vied with each other to show him kindness. He writes: "May 29—The old murderer is restrained from hurting me; but it seems he has power over my horses. One of them I was obliged to leave in Dublin, and afterwards another, having bought two to supply their places; the third soon got an ugly swelling in his shoulders, so that we doubted whether we could go on; and a boy at Clones, riding, I suppose galloping, the fourth over stones, the horse fell and nearly lamed himself." Perhaps Wesley blamed the devil when he ought to have blamed his own long journeys.

It was in one of these Irish tours that, preaching at a certain place in the afternoon, and being expected, in the evening, at a town several miles distant, he desired his chaise to be ready at the close of the service, so that he might start at once. As he left the chapel, the people, as usual, crowded about him, to shake hands with him; among others, a Methodist shoemaker pressed forward, and put into his hand a brown paper parcel, saying with manifest emotion: "Sir, this may be of use to you in your journey." Wesley thanked him, put the parcel into his pocket, and away he went. After travelling some distance, his curiosity prompted him to examine the nature of Crispin's present, which he

found to be an awl and a strong waxed thread. The road was rugged and lonely; and after a sudden jerk, the horses stopped. "What 's the matter?" asked Wesley. "Matter enough!" replied the coachman; "one of the traces is broken, and we can't go on." Wesley bethought him of his awl and thread; they were at once produced; the trace was mended; and so, by the poor shoemaker's gift, the congregation was saved from being disappointed of their preacher, and Wesley from a tiresome detention in a houseless neighbourhood.[1] 1787 Age 84

Wesley got back to Dublin on the 21st of June, having preached considerably more than a hundred times during his ten weeks' tour. A week later, on his birthday, June 28, he wrote: "I had the pleasure of a conversation with Mr. Howard, I think one of the greatest men in Europe. Nothing, but the mighty power of God, can enable him to go through his difficult and dangerous employments."

The great philanthropist was as much pleased with Wesley, as Wesley was with him. "I was encouraged by him," said he to Alexander Knox, Esq., "to go on vigorously with my own designs. I saw in him how much a single man might achieve by zeal and perseverance; and I thought, why may not I do as much in my way, as Mr. Wesley has done in his, if I am only as assiduous and persevering? and I determined I would pursue my work with more alacrity than ever."[2]

Howard, in early life, had heard Wesley preach, in Bedfordshire, and was deeply impressed with his discourse. In 1789, he called at Wesley's house, in London, to present him with his latest publication, "An Account of the Principal Lazarettos in Europe," in quarto; but Wesley was not at home. "Present," said he, "my respects and love to Mr. Wesley; tell him, I had hoped to have seen him once more: perhaps, we may meet again in this world, but, if not, we shall meet I trust in a better."[3] And away he went on his mission of mercy to Russia, where he fell an honoured victim to his benevolence, on January 20, 1790.

[1] Memoirs of Burgess.
[2] Life of Henry Moore, p. 271.
[3] Ibid. p. 272

1787 Age 84 Having held his Irish conference, Wesley preached his farewell sermon, in Dublin, on the 11th of July; and arriving in England on the 12th, he proceeded to Manchester, in the neighbourhood of which he continued until August 6. Here he held his English conference, though, in his journal, he never mentions it. The preachers were specially invited; but, on what principle the invitations were given, it is difficult to state. Thomas Taylor was assistant at Leeds, within fifty miles of Manchester, and moreover was one of the hundred mentioned in Wesley's deed of declaration; but he was also in favour of the Methodists having the sacraments from the hands of their own preachers; in other words, he was in favour of separation from the Established Church; and, perhaps, this was one of the reasons why he was not invited to the conference at Manchester. At all events, he writes:

"Mr. Wesley has sent his special summons to each preacher whom he wishes to attend conference, and has expressly forbidden any one else to go. I am unbidden, and think I am ill used. After labouring, with some degree of success, for more than twenty-four years, and without a crime having ever been alleged against me, I am debarred of a privilege granted to others who were converted under me, and whom I took into society. This is a flagrant injustice. Besides, I am a member of the legal conference. I'll venture to go, let consequences be what they may. If I am thrown overboard, I will swim as well as I can, believing the Lord will take me up."

Mr. Taylor's complaint was not without reason. He went; but says, he had little satisfaction, for much of the time was spent in trying to supersede the hymn-book published by Robert Spence.[1]

The original edition of the minutes of the Manchester conference is now before us, 12mo, 20 pages; but there is not a single syllable on what was the great question of the day, separation from the Church. And yet this was a question again and again introduced. Two years before, Wesley had ordained Pawson for Scotland, and, ever since, had addressed him as "reverend," Pawson wearing gown and bands, and administering the sacraments to the Scottish Methodists. Now that Pawson was brought back to England, he had to doff his canonicals, and had his letters from Wesley

[1] Manuscript journal.

inscribed with "Mr.," instead of "Rev." He loudly remonstrated; but got no redress; and at length, like a good Christian, more anxious to save souls than to wear sacerdotal robes, submitted to obey orders which were strangely inconsistent with Wesley's ordaining acts, and went on his way rejoicing. Pawson writes as follows, to his bosom friend, Charles Atmore. 1787 Age 84

"THORNER, *August* 8, 1787.

"MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,—Our conference ended on last Saturday. There were many preachers, and abundance of people, I think more than I ever saw at any conference before. Almost the whole time was taken up with temporal affairs. Mr. Wesley was in great haste, as he and Dr. Coke were going to Guernsey and Jersey. There has been a general revival of the work of God. Mr. Wesley seems more determined to abide in the Church than ever. He talked about it again and again, in the public conference, in the society, etc.; and in such a hot, fiery spirit, as I did not like to see. He talked of fighting with a flail, and of putting all out of society who do not go to church. *We* are to be just what we were before we came to Scotland,—no sacraments, no gowns, no nothing at all of any kind whatsoever. With much entreaty, I got him to ordain Mr. McAllum and Suter. Two more were ordained, one for the West Indies, and one for Nova Scotia.

"Charles Wesley, the Sunday before the conference opened, spoke, to the society in London, to this effect: 'I told you, forty years ago, that, from among yourselves, grievous wolves would arise, who would rend and tear the flock. You now see my words fulfilled. These self created bishops, and self made priests, are the very men. But I charge you all, in the presence of God, never receive the sacrament from any of them.'[1] So you see, he has discharged the people from receiving the sacrament of his own brother; for who but he is the *self created bishop?* O cursed prejudice! O furious bigotry! How does the fire from hell burn in that poor miserable man's breast!

"Perhaps, if I live till next conference, I may petition to return to Scotland, as there seems to be no prospect of doing anything, but just in the old way, while Mr. Wesley lives. Solomon says, there is no new thing under the sun; but here we see something, which, I believe, was never

[1] In his "Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures," published in 1762, Charles Wesley wrote, concerning the poor itinerants:

"Raised from the people's lowest lees,
Guard, Lord, Thy preaching witnesses,
Nor let their pride the honour claim
Of sealing covenants in Thy name:
Rather than suffer them to dare
Usurp the priestly character,
Save from the arrogant offence,
And snatch them uncorrupted hence."

(Hymn on Numbers xvi. 10.) "Wesley Poetry," vol. ix., p. 79.

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seen in the Christian church before,—that men, approved of God and their brethren, and that for many years, should be regularly ordained, and act in the capacity of ministers, and yet should be deposed from that office by one single man, and that without any crime committed, great or small, real or pretended. Even the pope himself never acted such a part as this. What an astonishing degree of power does our aged father and friend exercise! However, I am satisfied, and have nothing but love in my heart toward the good old man. But really it will not bear the light at all. Most affectionately yours,

"JOHN PAWSON."[1]

This was pretty strong to come from a man like Pawson; but it furnishes a glimpse of the proceedings of the conference of 1787, concerning which so little has been written, and shows the awkward position into which Wesley had put himself by his ordinations of men from whom he now withdrew the authority that he had previously given.

Never, however, had Methodism been so prosperous as now. The increase of members, in the United Kingdom, during the present year, was nearly four thousand; and in America, 6849. Letters, dated August, 1787, contain most marvellous intelligence. It was computed that, in Brunswick county, Virginia, not fewer than seven thousand persons were under deep conviction of their sin and danger; and as many as fifty in a day were savingly converted. At a recent quarterly meeting, six thousand were assembled, and hundreds were crying for mercy, including some of the principal inhabitants of the land, and not a few who had been persecutors.[2]

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[1] Manuscript letter.

[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1788, p. 486. It is only fair to add that all was not sunshine in America. At the conference of 1784, the American preachers had recorded a declaration that, "during the life of Mr. Wesley they were ready to obey his commands in matters belonging to church government"; but, in 1787, and thenceforward, this declaration was omitted from their printed minutes. Why? Because Wesley, without consulting them, had changed the time and place of holding their conference, and had appointed Richard Whatcoat to be co-superintendent with Francis Asbury.—(Etheridge's Life of Coke, p. 173.) Dr. Coke was present, and, in a letter printed four years afterwards, pronounced this an "excommunication" of Wesley, and declared that, in his opinion, it hastened Wesley's death; for, "from the time he was informed of it, he began to hang down his head, and to think he had lived long enough."—("Impartial Statement of the known Inconsistencies of Rev. Dr. Coke." By William Hammet: 1792.) We gravely doubt the correctness of Dr. Coke's opinion.

The Manchester conference concluded on Saturday, August 4, and, on the following day, besides meeting the select society, Wesley preached twice, and, with the assistance of his brother clergymen, administered the sacrament to twelve or thirteen hundred communicants. There are two other incidents, in connection with this conference, too interesting to be omitted. 1787 Age 84

At this period, the grandfather of the present Sir Robert Peel was thirty-seven years of age, and one of the most successful men in Lancashire. The leisure of his youthful days had been spent in reading and study, and, before he attained to his majority, a great portion of his time had been devoted to the improvement of machinery. At the age of twenty-three, he embarked in the cotton trade, and, by his industry and perseverance, had already become a man of wealth, though his riches fell immensely short of the two millions which, it is said, he left behind him at his death in 1830. Wesley writes: "1787, July 27—I was invited to breakfast at Bury, by Mr. Peel, a calico printer; who, a few years ago, began with £500, and is now supposed to have gained £50,000. Oh, what a miracle if he lose not his soul!" The invitation was accepted; and, long after this, when the calico printer had become a baronet, and had entered parliament, Wesley's visit was one of the pleasing reminiscences of his remarkable career. To the end of life, he cherished a warm affection for the Methodists. "My lads," said he, when some of his Methodist workmen applied to him for the site of Tamworth chapel,[1] "My lads, do not build your chapel too large, for people like to go to a little chapel well filled better than to a larger one comparatively empty. I often go to your chapels in Manchester, Liverpool, and London, and have no wish to find myself alone in a large pew, and pointed at as Sir Robert Peel. I have left most of my works in Lancashire under the management of Methodists, and they serve me excellently well. When I resided there, I asked Mr. Wesley, at one of his conferences, to come and breakfast with me; and he agreed, on condition that he might bring some of his children with him. Of course, I consented,

[1] *Wesley Banner*, 1850, p. 114.

1787 Age 84 and he came accompanied by six-and-thirty of his itinerant preachers." This was a curious episode in the history both of Wesley and the founder of the distinguished family that bears his name.

No man in the nation took a greater interest in the institution of Sunday-schools than Wesley. "I am glad," said he, to Richard Rodda, in a letter dated January 17, 1787, "I am glad you have taken in hand that blessed work of setting up Sunday-schools in Chester. It seems, these will be one great means of reviving religion throughout the nation. I wonder Satan has not sent out some able champion against them." [1]

It was three years since Raikes had first called attention to the importance of Sunday-schools in the *Gloucester Journal;* and already these "nurseries for Christians" had begun to dot and to adorn the country. That at Chester altogether originated with the Chester Methodists, though the rules were submitted to the bishop of the diocese, and had his entire approval. It contained nearly seven hundred children, who were taken to church once every Sunday. "We had no intention," said Richard Rodda, "as some persons represented, to make disciples to Methodism, but to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, that they might become useful members of civil and religious society."[2]

Some idea may be formed of the popularity of this new institution of the Christian church, from the fact that, in 1785, a Sunday-school society was formed, which, within two years, was the means of establishing more than two hundred schools; and that it was calculated, in 1787, that the number of children then taught in Sunday-schools exceeded two hundred thousand."[3]

As already stated, more than once, there were a few which existed long before Raikes' school at Gloucester,—as, for instance, Miss Hannah Ball's, at Wycombe, founded in 1769. There was also another at Little Lever, the birthplace of Oliver Heywood, four miles from Bolton, in Lancashire. Here James Hey resided, a poor man who obtained a living by winding bobbins for weavers. About the year 1775, James

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1846, p. 562. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. p. 563.

got the use of a room in a cottage, to which, twice every Sunday, he summoned the boys and girls of the neighbourhood, to teach them reading, his substitute for a bell being an old brass mortar and pestle. Mr. Adam Crompton, the paper manufacturer, sent him a supply of books; three branch establishments were formed; subscriptions were given; and a shilling per Sunday paid to each teacher for his Sunday services.[1] 1787 Age 84.

In June 1785, a Methodist school was started in the old Ridgway Gates chapel, Bolton, chiefly through the instrumentality of George Eskrick, who was its principal manager as long as he lived. One of the scholars present, the first Sunday, was Peter Haslam, eleven years of age, afterwards a most devout and useful itinerant preacher,[2]—the first fruits of others who, in the same institution, received their first trainings for the Christian ministry. In the course of a few years, the number of scholars, attending the Bolton Sunday-school, was 2,000; and the *average* number, for the first thirty years of its existence, was 1800.[3] Children came to it, several miles, from all the country round about. Reading and writing were taught. Each class was spoken to separately every Sunday on religious subjects. The masters were devoted to their work, and all gave their services gratuitously. The change in the manners and morals of the children was marvellous; and about a hundred of them sang like seraphs.[4] No wonder, that such a school attracted the attention of Wesley. Hence, on the very day when he and six-and-thirty of his itinerants breakfasted with the father of the Peels, he wrote:

"From Mr. Peel's we went to Bolton. Here are eight hundred poor children, taught in our Sunday-schools, by about eighty masters, who receive no pay but what they are to receive from their Great Master. About a hundred of them, part boys and part girls, are taught to sing; and they sang so true, that, all singing together, there seemed to be but one voice. The house was throughly filled, while I explained and applied the first commandment. What is all morality or religion without

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1836, p. 286. The Rev. David Simpson, also, is said to have commenced Sunday-schools, in Macclesfield, as early as the year 1778.—(*Evangelical Magazine*, 1842, p. 84.)

[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1805, p. 1.

[3] Manuscript letter.

[4] *Methodist Magazine*, 1788, p. 490.

1787. Age 84 this? A mere castle in the air. In the evening, many of the children still hovering round the house, I desired forty or fifty to come in and sing, 'Vital spark of heavenly flame.' Although some of them were silent, not being able to sing for tears, yet the harmony was such as I believe could not be equalled in the king's chapel."

This was not bounce, nor was it the random garrulity of an aged man. Nine months afterwards, Wesley came again, and wrote:

"This I must avow, there is not such another set of singers in any of the Methodist congregations in the three kingdoms as there is at Bolton. There cannot be; for we have near a hundred such trebles,—boys and girls, selected out of our Sunday-schools, and accurately taught—as are not to be found together in any chapel, cathedral, or music room within the four seas. Besides, the spirit with which they all sing, and the beauty of many of them, so suits the melody, that I defy any to exceed it; except the singing of angels in our Father's house."

Good singing is a good thing, and, like most other good things, is far from being common. Had this been the only result of Bolton Sunday-school, the school would have existed to good purpose. But hear Wesley's description, written "Sunday, April 20, 1788," and let Methodist Sunday-school teachers now conscientiously and diligently endeavour to make their establishments resemble that at Bolton then.

"At eight, and at one, the house was throughly filled. About three, I met between 900 and a thousand of the children belonging to our Sunday-schools. I never saw such a sight before. They were all exactly clean, as well as plain, in their apparel. All were serious and well behaved. Many, both boys and girls, had as beautiful faces as, I believe, England or Europe can afford. When they all sung together, and none of them out of tune, the melody was beyond that of any theatre; and, what is the best of all, many of them truly fear God, and some rejoice in His salvation. These are a pattern to all the town. Their usual diversion is to visit the poor that are sick, (sometimes six, or eight, or ten together,) to exhort, comfort, and pray with them. Frequently ten or more of them get together to sing and pray by themselves; sometimes thirty or forty; and are so earnestly engaged, alternately singing, praying, and crying, that they know not how to part."

We have already stated that, the day after Wesley closed his conference at Manchester, he preached twice, and, assisted by others, administered the Lord's supper to twelve or thirteen hundred persons. The next day, August 6, he secured the whole of the coach, that run between Manchester and

Birmingham, for himself and his friends. Six packed themselves within, and eight arranged themselves without, and off they all set at midnight; but even the presence of fourteen Methodist preachers was not an insurance against accident. No doubt, many a hymn was sung as they whisked away through beautiful Cheshire scenery, the stars shining approvingly, and the fields all round wrapped in solemn silence; but, a little before three in the morning, when approaching Congleton, the coach broke down beneath its unwonted burden, and had to be abandoned for another. In about an hour, number two was crippled like number one; while one of the horses was so knocked up as to be scarcely able to go at all. This Methodist monopoly of the Birmingham stage coach issued, not in a moonlight pleasure trip, but in a series of disasters which men so pious and so good had not expected. The distance was not great; but nineteen hours were spent in getting over it. The party arrived at Birmingham at 7 p.m.; Wesley found a congregation waiting; he stepped out of the coach into the chapel, and began preaching without delay. "And such," says he, "was the goodness of God, that I found no more weariness when I had done than if I had rested all the day." 1787 Age 84

This was marvellous, in the case of an old man, above eighty; but, notwithstanding this, he was off again, before five o'clock next morning; travelled nearly eleven hours; and, at night, preached in the new chapel at Gloucester. But even this was not all. The morning after, he set out again at two o'clock, travelled till half-past four in the afternoon, and preached at Salisbury in the evening. Next morning at four, he took chaise to Southampton, where, on August 9 and 10, he preached thrice.

Here the Methodists worshipped in an auction room; and then in a loft, used by a bricklayer in stowing away his scaffolding, and which acquired imperishable fame as the spiritual birthplace of Elizabeth Wallbridge, the "Dairyman's Daughter."[1]

Wesley, accompanied by Dr. Coke and Joseph Bradford, was now on his way to the Channel islands; where Methodism

[1] Smith's History of Methodism.

1787 Age 84 had been introduced as early as the year 1783, by certain Methodist soldiers, who wrote to England for a preacher. Robert Carr Brackenbury, a gentleman of fortune, rented a house in the town of St. Heliers, Jersey; and he and his attendant, Alexander Kilham, preached throughout the island, amid violent persecution, but with great success.[1] At the conference of 1786, Adam Clarke was sent; and now there were, in the three islands of Jersey, Guernsey, and Alderney, Methodist societies containing three hundred members.

On Saturday, August 11, Wesley and his friends started from Southampton for Guernsey, but, before the day was ended, had to put into Yarmouth harbour, in the Isle of Wight, where they were detained till Monday, but improved their detention by preaching four times in the market house. On Monday the storm had abated, and they again set out; but, in the afternoon, were glad to seek shelter at Swanage, where Wesley found a small society, and preached in the presbyterian chapel. Again they went on board, and hoped to reach Guernsey on Tuesday afternoon; but the storm obliged them to steer for the isle of Alderney, in the bay of which they narrowly escaped being dashed to pieces. Having slept in a five bedded room, and preached upon the beach, they again set sail for Guernsey, where they at last arrived, and were warmly welcomed by Mr. De Jersey. Here five days were spent, during which Wesley preached seven sermons, and dined at the governor's.

On Monday, August 20, they landed in Jersey, where they were detained by storms and hurricanes till the 28th. During the eight days, Wesley preached a dozen sermons, Mr. Brackenbury acting as his interpreter.

On the 28th, he returned to Guernsey, where, by stress of weather, he was obliged to stay till September 6, but still employed himself as actively as ever. He then sailed for Penzance, in Cornwall, and arrived in safety.

Wesley's labours in the Channel islands were greatly blessed; but his voyages were adventurous, and, more than once, extremely dangerous. They were also rich in religious incidents. On one occasion, two of the sailors, who were

[1] Drew's Life of Coke.

aloft, swore most dreadfully; and, greatly to the surprise of his companions, Wesley seemed not to notice them. At length, the sailors still swearing, Wesley looked up to them, and said: "Swear louder, and then perhaps God Almighty will hear you." The ironical reproof stopped the blasphemy.[1] 1787 Age 84

Another incident is worth relating. Wesley writes in his journal: "September 6—We went on board with a fair, moderate wind; but we had just entered the ship when the wind died away. We cried to God for help; and it presently sprung up, exactly fair, and did not cease till it brought us into Penzance bay." This is all; but Adam Clarke, who was present, gives further details. Wesley was reading in the cabin; but, hearing the noise and bustle occasioned by putting about the vessel, to stand on her different tacks, he looked out of the cabin door, and asked what was matter. Being told, he quietly remarked, "Then let us go to prayer." Coke, Bradford, and Clarke having prayed, Wesley began: "Almighty and everlasting God, Thou hast sway everywhere, and all things serve the purposes of Thy will: Thou holdest the winds in Thy hands, and sittest upon the waterfloods, and reignest a King for ever: command these winds and these waves that they obey *Thee;* and take us speedily and safely to the haven whither we would be!" The power of his petition was felt by all: he rose from his knees, made no remark, and resumed his reading. Clarke went on deck, and, to his surprise, found the vessel standing her right course, with a steady breeze, which brought them safe to Cornwall.[2]

Wesley was more than satisfied with his trip to these lovely islands. "Here," says he, "is an open door: high and low, rich and poor, receive the word gladly; so that I could not regret being detained by contrary winds several days longer than we intended."[3]

Wesley's landing in Cornwall was unexpected, but not unwelcome. He writes: "We appeared to our friends here as men risen from the dead. Great was their rejoicing over us; and great was the power of God in the midst of the con-

[1] Reynolds's "Anecdotes of Wesley," p. 25.
[2] Life of Clarke, vol. i., p. 259.
[3] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 80.

1787 Age 84 gregation." On Saturday, September 8, he preached twice, out of doors, to large congregations; and, the day following, thrice, besides meeting a society in a chapel "exactly round, and composed wholly of brazen slags, which," says Wesley, "I suppose will last as long as the earth."

On September 14, he got to Bristol, where he spent the next three weeks. First of all, "with the assistance of two of his friends, he had to answer *abundance of letters*," the accumulation of the last five weeks. Then, he had to visit the "country societies" round about, and, among others, that at Castle Carey, where the mob had thrown the first preacher, that visited the place, into a horse pond. On October 8, he returned to London, where he employed the next few days "in answering letters, and preparing matter for the magazine." One or two of the letters, belonging to this period, may be inserted here.

The first was addressed to William Black, in Nova Scotia, who was considerably troubled with a recent importation from Scotland, in the form of a presbyterian minister, who was more a Socinian than a Calvinist.

"NEAR BATH, *September* 26, 1787.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—You have great reason to praise God for the great things that He hath done, and to expect still greater things than these. Your grand difficulty, now, will be to guard your flock against that accomplished seducer. When you mentioned a person came from Scotland, I took it for granted that he was a Calvinist. But I find it is not so well; for I take a Socinian to be far worse than even a predestinarian. Nevertheless, I advise you and all our preachers, never oppose him openly. Doing thus would only give the unawakened world an advantage against you all. I advise you farther, never speak severely, much less contemptuously, of him in any mixed company. You must use no weapons in opposing him, but only those of truth and love. Your wisdom is: (1) Strongly to inculcate the doctrines which he denies; but without taking any notice of him, or seeming to know that any one does deny them. (2) To advise all our brethren (but not in public) never to hear him, at the peril of their souls. And (3) narrowly to inquire whether any one is staggered, and to set such an one right as soon as possible. Thus, by the blessing of God, even those that are lame will not be turned out of the way. Peace be with your spirit!

"I am, dear Billy, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

[1] Black's Memoirs, p. 200.

The next has not before been published. Jonathan Crowther and Duncan McAllum had been appointed to succeed Edward Burbeck and Joshua Keighley, in Scotland. On arriving, they found the former "dying of fever in a *lousy* bed"; and the latter already dead and buried. Their journey had been adventurous and dangerous; their circuit (Inverness) was large; and their allowances next to nothing; for Crowther received only fifty shillings for the whole year's labour; and forty of these he spent in removing to Dunbar. He wrote to Wesley: "No man is fit for Inverness circuit, unless his flesh be brass, his bones iron, and his heart harder than a stoic's." After giving an account of the death of Burbeck and Keighley, he adds: "I too shall probably be sacrificed in this miserable corner; and, if I were doing good, I should be content (if I had them) to sacrifice seven lives every year; but to live in misery, and to die in banishment, for next to nothing, is afflicting indeed."[1] 1787 Age 84

Poor Crowther was downhearted, and no wonder. Wesley's reply was characteristic.

"NEAR BATH, *September* 25, 1787

"DEAR JONATHAN,—The sum of the matter is, you want money; and money you shall have, if I can beg, borrow, or anything but steal. I say, therefore, 'Dwell in the land, and be doing good, and, verily, thou shalt be fed.' I should be sorry for the death of Mr. Burbeck, but that I know God does all things well; and, if His work prospers in your hands, this will make your labours light. Our preachers now find, in the north of Scotland, what they formerly found all over England; yet they went on; and when I had only blackberries to eat in Cornwall, still God gave me strength sufficient for my work. I am, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."

"P.S.—To Mr. Atlay

Pay to Jonathan Crowther, or his order, Five Guineas.

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

The next two letters refer to a case of discipline in the Channel islands, in which Wesley displayed greater liberality than some of his itinerants. The first was written to Robert Carr Brackenbury, the second to Adam Clarke.

"LONDON, *October* 20, 1787.

"DEAR SIR,—Mr. —— is undoubtedly a good young man; and has a tolerably good understanding. But he thinks it better than it is; and, in

[1] Crowther's manuscript autobiography. [2] Ibid.

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consequence, is apt to put himself in your or my place. For these fifty years, if any one said, 'If you do not put such an one out of society, I will go out of it'; I have said, 'Pray go; I, not you, are to judge who shall stay.' I, therefore, greatly approve of your purpose, to give Mr. W—— a full hearing in the presence of all the preachers. I have often repented of judging too severely; but very seldom of being too merciful. As the point is undoubtedly of very great importance, it deserved serious consideration; and I am glad you took the pains to consider it, and discussed it so admirably well, according to Scripture and sound reason.

"I ever am, dear sir, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

"LONDON, *December* 8, 1787.

". . . Brother de Queteville and you do not mind what I say. I do not wonder at him, (he does not know me,) but I do at you. His natural temper is stern; yours is not. Therefore, I expect *you* to regard me, whether he does or no. We have no such custom among our societies, nor ever had, as for a man to acknowledge his fault before a whole society. There shall be no such custom while I live. If he acknowledge it before the preachers it is enough.

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

In the month of May of the present year, there was instituted, in London, a society for the suppression of the slave trade, of which the chief members were Granville Sharp, William Dillwyn, Thomas Clarkson, and William Wilberforce. In this, as in other great beneficent movements, Wesley was one of the pioneers. Thirteen years previously, he had published his "Thoughts upon Slavery"; and, at the commencement of the present year, had inserted a long letter, on the same subject, in his *Arminian Magazine*. The formation of an antislavery society was to him a joy; and he, at once, wrote to the committee, expressing his satisfaction. He desired to warn them, that they must expect great difficulties and great opposition; for those interested in the system of slavery were a powerful body, and would employ hireling writers, who would have neither justice nor mercy. As for himself, he would do all he could to promote the object of their institution. He would reprint a new and large edition of his "Thoughts on Slavery," and circulate it among his friends in England and Ireland, to whom he would add a

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 6.
[2] *Wesleyan Times*, Sept. 28, 1868.

few words in favour of their design. He then concluded in these words: "I commend you to Him, who is able to carry you through all opposition, and support you under all discouragements." 1787 Age 84

On the 30th of October, 1787, he sent a second letter, which was read to the society, and in which he said, that he had now read the publications which the committee had sent him, and that he took, if possible, a still deeper interest in their cause. He exhorted them to more than ordinary diligence and perseverance; to be prepared for opposition; to be cautious about the manner of procuring information and evidence, that no stain might fall upon their character; and to take care that the question should be argued as well upon the consideration of interest as of humanity and justice, the former of which he feared would have more weight than the latter.[1]

Wesley fulfilled his promise to render help. Hence the following to Mr. Thomas Funnell, Lewes, Sussex.

"*November* 24, 1787.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Whatever assistance I can give those generous men, who join to oppose that execrable trade, I certainly shall give. I have printed a large edition of the 'Thoughts on Slavery,' and dispersed them to every part of England. But there will be vehement opposition made, both by slave merchants and slave holders; and they are mighty men: but our comfort is, He that dwelleth on high is mightier.

"I am, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Thus began a struggle, which lasted six-and-forty years, and terminated in the Emancipation Act, which took effect on August 1, 1834. Wesley died four years after the fight commenced; Wilberforce just as the victory was being won, for he expired while the resolutions, preparatory to the bill, were being passed in the House of Commons.

The last three months of the year 1787 were spent in London, and in the usual journeys through the surrounding counties. On October 15, he began what he calls his "little tour through Oxfordshire," and preached twice a day, besides travelling. At this time, Joseph Entwisle and Richard Reece

[1] Clarkson's "Abolition of the Slave Trade," vol. i., p. 457.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1827, p. 391.

1787 Age 84 were in the "Oxfordshire" circuit. The former, a young man of twenty, while riding with Wesley, had the misfortune to have a horse whose pace was swifter than its steps were sure. The nag fell with suddenness, the young preacher made a summersault over the head of the prostrate animal, and alighted on his feet unhurt. "Well done!" cried Wesley, delighted with the agility of his youthful friend, and, no doubt, remembering many of his own marvellous escapes,—"Well done, Joseph! I could not have done better than that myself."[1]

Richard Reece also used to relate an anecdote respecting Wesley's visit to this, his first circuit, in 1787. Wesley was accompanied by Thomas Rankin, and the two came to Oxford, where Wesley had to preach in the chapel in New Inn Hall Lane. The front gallery was filled with gownsmen, who, whatever other accomplishments they had acquired, still lacked the politeness of gentlemen, for, as soon as Wesley began to read his text, the beardless boys, in gowns and college caps, began to cheer. Up jumped Rankin, his Scotch blood boiling, and, with stentorian voice, cried: "In the name of God, gentlemen, what can ye mean, to interrupt and insult a servant of the Lord, about to preach salvation?" Wesley, more used to such behaviour than his impetuous friend, calmly said, "Sit down, Tommy, sit down"; and then quietly proceeded with his discourse.[2]

In his excursion through Kent, Wesley preached both morning and evening, every day. In Hertfordshire, he met Simeon from Cambridge.

"Sir," said young Simeon, "Sir, I understand you are called an Arminian; now I am sometimes called a Calvinist, and therefore, I suppose, we are to draw daggers. But, before I begin to combat, with your permission, I will ask you a few questions, not from impertinent curiosity, but for real instruction. Pray sir, do you feel yourself a depraved creature, so depraved that you would never have thought of turning to God, if God had not put it into your heart?"

"Yes," said the veteran, "I do indeed."

"And do you utterly despair of recommending yourself to

[1] Fntwisle's Memoir, p. 36.
[2] *Wesleyan Times*, June 19, 1849.

God by anything that you can do; and look for salvation solely through the blood and righteousness of Christ?" 1787 Age 84

"Yes, solely through Christ."

"But, sir, supposing you were *first* saved by Christ, are you not somehow or other to save yourself afterwards, by your good works?"

"No; I must be saved by Christ, from first to last."

"Allowing, then, that you were first turned by the grace of God, are you not in some way or other to keep yourself by your own power?"

"No."

"What, then? are you to be upheld every hour and every moment by God, as much as an infant in its mother's arms?"

"Yes, altogether."

"And is all your hope in the grace and mercy of God, to preserve you unto His heavenly kingdom?"

"Yes, I have no hope but in Him."

"Then, sir, with your leave, I will put up my dagger again: for this is all my Calvinism; this is my election, my justification, my final perseverance. It is in substance all that I hold, and as I hold it; and, therefore, if you please, instead of searching out terms and phrases to be a ground of contention between us, we will cordially unite in those things wherein we agree."[1]

Such was the catechetical examination instituted by a young parson of twenty-eight, and submitted to by an old man of eighty-four.

In November, Wesley took another step, which virtually involved a separation from the Church of England. Seventeen years before, in warning his preachers against such a separation, he had not only directed them and the people to attend the services and sacraments of the Church, but to guard against calling preachers "ministers," and their places of worship "meeting-houses." "Do not," said he, "license them as such: the proper form of a petition to the judge or justice is, 'A. B. desires to have his house in C— licensed for public worship." He continued: "Do not license yourself till you are constrained; and then not as a Dissenter, but a Methodist. It is

[1] "Wesley the Worthy," by Dr. Dobbin, p. 91.

1787 Age 84 time enough when you are prosecuted, to take the oaths. And by so doing you are licensed."[1]

Hitherto, Wesley had been opposed to licensing, except in cases of necessity, simply on the ground that this savoured of separation from the Established Church. Now he writes:

"1787, November 3—I had a long conversation with Mr. Clulow," [his legal adviser,] "on that execrable act called the Conventicle Act. After consulting the Act of Toleration, with that of the fourteenth of Queen Anne, we were both clearly convinced, that it was the safest way to license *all* our chapels, and *all* our travelling preachers, not as Dissenters, but simply 'preachers of the gospel'; and that no justice, or bench of justices, has any authority to refuse licensing either the house or the preachers."

The "execrable Conventicle Act" was levelled against Dissenters from the Church of England; the Act of Toleration was passed for the relief of such Dissenters; and Wesley, by availing himself of the provisions of that act, *ipso facto*, conceded the point that the Methodists were Dissenters.

He still, however, persisted in asserting that the Methodists were members of the Church of England; and this involved both him and them in further difficulties. In some instances, the magistrates remarked: "You profess yourselves to be members of the Church of England; therefore, your licences are worthless; nor can you, as members of the Church, receive any benefit from the Act of Toleration." This was a subtle distinction; and Wesley saw that the Methodists must either profess themselves Dissenters, or be subjected to an indefinite amount of trouble. He was unwilling to alter their relation to the Established Church; and yet he wished them to be saved from this embarrassment. Hence the following, addressed to a member of parliament.[2]

"DEAR SIR,—Last month, a few poor people met together in Somersetshire, to pray, and to praise God, in a friend's house; there was no preaching at all. Two neighbouring justices fined the man of the house £20. I suppose, he was not worth twenty shillings. Upon this, his household goods were distrained, and sold to pay the fine. He appealed to the

[1] Large Minutes, 1770.

[2] Henry Moore says this letter was written in the autumn of 1790; and that, when the lawyer, at the head of the persecution, boasted that he would drive Methodism out of Somersetshire, Wesley quietly remarked, "Yes, when he can drive God out of it."—(Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 383.)

quarter sessions; but all the justices averred, 'The Methodists could have no relief from the Act of Toleration, because they went to church; and that, so long as they did so, the Conventicle Act should be executed upon them.' 1787 Age 84

"Last Sunday, when one of our preachers was beginning to speak to a quiet congregation, a neighbouring justice sent a constable to seize him, though he was licensed; and would not release him till he had paid £20, telling him his licence was good for nothing, 'because he was a Churchman.'

"Now, sir, what can the Methodists do? They are liable to be ruined by the Conventicle Act, and they have no relief from the Act of Toleration! If this is not oppression, what is? Where then is English liberty? the liberty of Christians, yea, of every rational creature? who, as such, has a right to worship God according to his own conscience. But, waiving the question of right and wrong, what prudence is there in oppressing such a body of loyal subjects? If these good magistrates could drive them, not only out of Somersetshire, but out of England, who would be gainers thereby? Not his majesty, whom we honour and love; not his ministers, whom we love and serve for his sake. Do they wish to throw away so many thousand friends, who are now bound to them by stronger ties than that of interest? If you will speak a word to Mr. Pitt on that head, you will oblige yours, etc. "JOHN WESLEY."

About the same time, Wesley wrote as follows to a bishop.[1]

"MY LORD,—I am a dying man, having already one foot in the grave. Humanly speaking, I cannot long creep upon the earth, being now nearer ninety than eighty years of age. But I cannot die in peace, before I have discharged this office of Christian love to your lordship. I write without ceremony, as neither hoping nor fearing anything from your lordship, or any man living. And I ask, in the name and presence of Him, to whom both you and I are shortly to give an account, why do you trouble those that are quiet in the land; those that fear God and work righteousness? Does your lordship know what the Methodists are? That many thousands of them are zealous members of the Church of England; and strongly attached, not only to his majesty, but to his present ministry? Why should your lordship, setting religion out of the question, throw away such a body of respectable friends? Is it for their religious sentiments? Alas, my lord, is this a time to persecute any man for conscience sake? I beseech you, my lord, do as you would be done to. You are a man of sense; you are a man of learning; nay, I verily believe, (what is of infinitely more value,) you are a man of piety. Then think, and let think. I pray God to bless you with the choicest of His blessings.

"I am, my lord, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

[1] This letter is without date. Henry Moore says it was written about 1790. (Wesley's Life, vol. ii., p. 383.)

[2] Atmore's "History of Persecution," p. 420.

1787 Age 84 Is it surprising that the Methodists wished to separate from the Church of England, and that Wesley was led, in fact driven, to take the dissenting steps he did? And yet, to the very last, we find him still adhering to the church of his early choice. Already the Methodists had begun to have service in church hours; but this was far from having his warm approval. Only two days after his consultation with Mr. Clulow, he went to Dorking, where he wrote:

"The congregation was, as usual, large and serious. But there is no increase in the society. So that we have profited nothing by having our service in the church hours, which some imagined would have done wonders. I do not know that it has done more good anywhere in England; in Scotland I believe it has."

If possible, Wesley was more popular than ever. He writes:

"November 4—the congregation at the new chapel" [City Road] "was far larger than usual; and the number of communicants was so great, that I was obliged *to consecrate thrice.*" "November 9—A friend offering to bear my expenses, I set out to Nottingham, where I preached a charity sermon for the infirmary, which was the design of my coming. This is not a county infirmary, but is open to all England; yea, to all the world; and everything about it is so neat, so convenient, and so well ordered, that I have seen none like it in the three kingdoms."[1] "November 25—I preached two charity sermons at West Street, in behalf of our poor children." "December 16—After preaching at Spitalfields, I hastened to St. John's, Clerkenwell, and preached a charity sermon for the Finsbury dispensary; as I would gladly countenance every institution of the kind."

All this was extra work; for Wesley's chief employment, at the end of every year, was preaching to the London Methodists, and meeting the London classes. Strange to say, the latter was to Wesley an irksome task. Hence he writes:

"1787, November 19—I began the *unpleasing work* of visiting the classes. I still continue to do this in London and Bristol, as well as in Cork and Dublin. With the other societies, their respective assistants supply my lack of service."

There were also other things, far from pleasant, requiring

[1] The infirmary was built in 1781, on land partly given by the Duke of Newcastle, and partly by the corporation. During the first thirty years of its existence, it afforded assistance to 33,926 persons.

his attention. A Laodicean spirit had crept in among the London Methodists, and, in strong terms, he had to warn them of their sin and danger. They were also £300 in debt, and he found it necessary to devise means to make the income equal to the expenditure. His preachers also, and his household, vexed him. He writes: 1787 Age 84

"1787. Sunday, December 9—I went down at half-hour past five, but found no preacher in the chapel, though we had three or four in the house; so I preached myself. Afterwards, inquiring why none of my family attended the morning preaching, they said it was because they sat up too late. I resolved to put a stop to this; and, therefore, ordered, that (1) every one under my roof should go to bed at nine; that (2) every one might attend the morning preaching; and so they have done ever since."

Amid all this labour and annoyance, it is amusing to find this venerable man, in the eighty-fifth year of his age, visiting what then answered to the Madame Tussaud's exhibition of 1871, and evincing a curiosity and a keenness of observation not often equalled by the visitors of the present time. Hence the following.

"December 10—I was desired to see the celebrated waxwork at the museum in Spring Gardens. It exhibits most of the crowned heads in Europe, and shows their characters in their countenance. Sense and majesty appear in the king of Spain; dulness and sottishness in the king of France; infernal subtlety in the late king of Prussia; (as well as in the skeleton Voltaire;) calmness and humanity in the emperor, and king of Portugal; exquisite stupidity in the prince of Orange; and amazing coarseness, with everything that is unamiable, in czarina.

With the exception of contributing to the *Arminian Magazine*, Wesley's literary life was ended. He revised former publications, as, for instance, his Notes on the New Testament; and he occasionally published an extract from some other author; but all the *original* productions of his mind and pen were now published in the magazine. During this present year, he committed to the press a new pocket hymn-book, 24mo, 240 pages; but the work was *compiled*, not *written*, and was intended as a substitute for the volume issued in 1785. He also published "Conjectures concerning the Nature of Future Happiness. Translated from the French of Monsieur Bonnet, of Geneva:" 12mo, 12 pages,—a remarkable tract, little

1787 known, but full of thought.[1] The following is Wesley's address
Age 84 "To the Reader." "Dublin, April 7, 1787. I am happy in communicating to men of sense in this kingdom, and at a very low price, one of the most sensible tracts I ever read.—JOHN WESLEY."

The magazine, as usual, contains six original sermons by Wesley, several of them among the most able and interesting that he ever wrote. That on Temptation is marked by great discrimination and beauty. The one on Dress fearlessly denounces what was then, and still is, a fearfully prevailing evil. Having laid down the principles, that "slovenliness is no part of religion"; and that "there may undoubtedly be a moderate difference of apparel, between persons of different stations"; he proceeds to show, that the natural effects of "adorning ourselves with gold, or pearls, or costly array," are pride, vanity, anger, and lust; and concludes with one of his most withering addresses to the Methodists then living, and which the Methodists of the present day would do well to ponder.

"Have not many of you grown finer as fast as you have grown richer? As you increased in substance, have you not increased in dress? Witness the profusion of ribbons, gauze, or linen about your heads! What have you profited then by bearing the reproach of Christ? by being called Methodists? Are you not as fashionably dressed as others of your rank that are no Methodists? Do you ask, 'But may we not as well buy fashionable things as unfashionable?' I answer, Not if they give you a bold, immodest look, as those huge hats, bonnets, headdresses do. And not, if they cost more. 'But I can *afford* it.' Oh, lay aside for ever that idle nonsensical word! No Christian can *afford* to waste any part of the substance which God has entrusted him with. How can it be, that, after so many warnings, you persist in the same folly? Is it not hence? There are among you some that neither profit themselves by all they hear, nor are willing that others should; and these, if any of you are almost persuaded to dress as Christians, reason, and rally, and laugh you out of it. O ye pretty triflers, I entreat you not to do the devil's work any longer. Whatever ye do yourselves, do not harden the hearts of others. And you, that are of a better mind, avoid these tempters with all possible care. You answer, universal custom is against me. Not only the profane, but the religious

[1] Its republication would enrich the pages of the *Methodist Magazine* of the present day. One conjecture is, that, after the resurrection, "our eyes may unite in themselves the qualities of microscopes and telescopes, and accommodate themselves exactly to all distances."

world, run violently the other way. Look into, I do not say the theatres, but the churches, nay, and the meetings of every denomination (except a few old fashioned quakers, or the people called Moravians); look into the congregations, in London or elsewhere, of those that are styled gospel ministers; look into Northampton chapel, yea, into the Tabernacle, or the chapel in Tottenham Court Road; nay, look into the chapel in West Street, or that in the City Road; look at the very people that sit under the pulpit, or by the side of it—and are not *those that can afford it* (I can hardly refrain from doing them the honour of naming their names) as richly, as fashionably adorned, as those of the same rank in other places? This is a melancholy truth. I am ashamed of it; but I know not how to help it. I call heaven and earth to witness this day, that it is not my fault. The trumpet has not *given an uncertain sound*, for near fifty years last past. O God! Thou knowest I have borne a clear and faithful testimony. In print, in preaching, in meeting the society, I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. I am, therefore, clear of the blood of those that will not hear. It lies upon their own heads. And, yet, I warn you once more, in the name, and in the presence of God, that the number of those that rebel against God is no excuse for their rebellion. He hath expressly told us, *Thou shalt not follow the multitude to do evil.* I conjure you, all who have any regard for me, show me, before I go hence, that I have not laboured, even in this respect, in vain, for near half a century. Let me see, before I die, a Methodist congregation full as plainly dressed as a quaker congregation. Only be more consistent with yourselves. Let your dress be *cheap* as well as plain; otherwise you do but trifle with God and me, and your own souls. I pray, let there be no costly silks among you, how grave soever they may be. Let there be no *quaker linen*, proverbially so called, for their exquisite fineness; no Brussels lace; no elephantine hats or bonnets, those scandals of female modesty. Be all of a piece, dressed, from head to foot, as persons *professing godliness;* professing to do everything, small and great, with the single view of pleasing God."

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Wesley's sermon on the Lord's Supper was written in 1732, and has been already noticed. To the sentiments then avowed, he still adhered.

That on the More Excellent Way is characteristic of himself; and re-enforces his views on early rising, on the manner of transacting business, on food, conversation, amusements, and money. One or two extracts may be given.

"Diversions are of various kinds. Some are almost peculiar to men, as the sports of the field,—hunting, shooting, fishing. Others are indifferently used by persons of both sexes,—as races, masquerades, plays, assemblies, balls, cards, dancing and music; to which may be added, the reading of plays, novels, romances, newspapers, and fashionable poetry. Some diversions, which were formerly in great request, are now fallen into

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disrepute. The nobility and gentry, (in England at least,) seem totally to disregard the once fashionable diversion of hawking; and the vulgar themselves are no longer diverted by men hacking and hewing each other in pieces at broad sword. The noble game of quarter staff, likewise, is now exercised by very few. Yea, cudgelling has lost its humour, even in Wales itself. Bear baiting is now very seldom seen, and bull baiting not very often. And it seems cock fighting would totally cease in England, were it not for two or three right honourable patrons. It is not needful to say anything more of these foul 'remains of Gothic barbarity,' than that they are a reproach, not only to all religion, but even to human nature. One would not pass so severe a censure on the sports of the field. Let those, who have nothing better to do, still run foxes and hares out of breath. Neither need much be said about horse races, till some man of sense will undertake to defend them. It seems a great deal more may be said in defence of seeing a serious tragedy. I could not do it with a clear conscience, at least, not in an English theatre, the sink of all profaneness and debauchery; but possibly others can. I cannot say quite so much for balls, or assemblies; which are more reputable than masquerades, but must be allowed, by all impartial persons, to have exactly the same tendency. So undoubtedly have all public dancings. Of playing at cards, I say the same as seeing of plays. I could not do it with a clear conscience. But I am not obliged to pass any sentence on those that are otherwise minded. I leave them to their own Master; to Him let them stand or fall.

"But supposing these, as well as the reading of plays, novels, newspapers, and the like, to be quite *innocent diversions*, yet are there not more excellent ways of diverting themselves, for those that love or fear God? Would men of fortune divert themselves in the open air? They may do it, by cultivating and improving their lands, by planting their grounds, by laying out, carrying on, and perfecting their gardens and orchards. At other times, they may visit and converse with the most serious and sensible of their neighbours; or they may visit the sick, the poor, the widows, and fatherless in their afflictions. Do they desire to divert themselves in the house? They may read useful history, pious and elegant poetry, or several branches of natural philosophy. If you have time, you may divert yourselves by music, and perhaps by philosophical experiments. But, above all, when you have once learned the use of prayer, you will find, that this will fill every space of life, be interfused with all your employments, and, wherever you are, whatever you do, embrace you on every side. Then you will be able to say boldly:

'With me no melancholy void,
No moment lingers unemployed,
Or unimproved below;
My weariness of life is gone,
Who live to serve my God alone,
And only Jesus know.'"

On the subject of money, Wesley's "More Excellent Way," to the worldly minded, is equally startling, but one which he himself, for fifty years, invariably adopted. 1787 Age 84

"If you have a family, seriously consider, before God, how much each member of it wants, in order to have what is needful for life and godliness. And, in general, do not allow them less, nor much more than you allow yourself. This being done, fix your purpose, to gain no more. I charge you, in the name of God, do not increase your substance! As it comes daily or yearly, so let it go: otherwise you *lay up treasures upon earth;* and this our Lord as flatly forbids, as murder and adultery. By doing it, therefore, you would *treasure up to yourselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* But suppose it were not forbidden, how can you, on principles of reason, spend your money in a way, which God may *possibly forgive*, instead of spending it in a manner which He will *certainly reward?* You will have no reward in heaven, for what you *lay up:* you will, for what you *lay out.* Every pound you put into the earthly bank is sunk; it brings no interest above. But every pound you give to the poor is put into the bank of heaven; and it will bring glorious interest; yea, and such as will be accumulating to all eternity."

This was plain speaking; but who will undertake to gainsay it?

The sermon on Christian Courtesy is full of the wisdom of an aged, and widely experienced, saint; while that on Former Times Better than These is equally remarkable, and well worth reading.

The *Arminian Magazine* for 1787 is enriched, as usual, with letters, poetry, biography, apparition anecdotes, and choice extracts from other writers; but, besides these, there are a few other productions from Wesley's pen, as his able article "On Allegorical Writings in general, and especially the Parables of our Lord"; and his weighty "Thoughts upon Methodism." We can only afford space for an extract from the latter. He writes:

"I am not afraid, that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out."

After describing the rise of Methodism, he proceeds:

"From this short sketch of Methodism, any man of understanding may easily discern, that it is only plain, scriptural religion, guarded by a

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few prudential regulations. The essence of it is holiness of heart and life; the circumstantials all point to this. And as long as they are joined together in the people called Methodists, no weapon formed against them shall prosper. But, if even the circumstantial parts are despised, the essential will soon be lost. And if ever the essential parts should evaporate, what remains will be dung and dross.

"It nearly concerns us to see how the case stands with us at present. I fear, wherever riches have increased (exceeding few are the exceptions) the essence of religion, the mind that was in Christ, has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore, I do not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of true religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality; and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches.

"How then is it possible that Methodism, that is, the religion of the heart, though it flourishes now as a green bay tree, should continue in this state? For the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal; consequently, they increase in goods. Hence, they proportionably increase in pride, in the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away.

"Is there no way to prevent this? this continual declension of pure religion? We ought not to forbid people to be diligent and frugal; we *must* exhort all Christians, to gain all they can, and to save all they can; that is, in effect, to grow rich! What way then, I ask again, can we take, that our money may not sink us to the nethermost hell? There is one way, and there is no other under heaven. If those who *gain all they can*, and *save all they can*, will likewise *give all they can*, then the more they gain, the more they will grow in grace, and the more treasure they will lay up in heaven."

Wesley knew not how to flatter. However painful to himself or to others, when he deemed it needful, he never tried to conceal his thoughts. The above was not likely to win him the applause of prosperous and rich Methodists; but that to him was a matter of indifference. His great anxiety was to perpetuate *Methodism*,—not merely *Methodists*.

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WESLEY had published, in the ten volumes of his *Arminian Magazine* already issued, forty-two original sermons by himself; and he now ascertained, that a clergyman, in the west of England, intended to reprint them in a separate form. Wesley had been frequently solicited to do this himself; but had as often answered, "I leave this for my executors." Now, to prevent piracy, he determined to be his own republisher; and issued these invaluable discourses, with a few others, in four volumes, 12mo; to which he prefixed a preface, from which the following characteristic extract is taken. 1788 Age 85

"Is there need to apologise to sensible persons for the plainness of my style? A gentleman, whom I much love and respect, lately informed me, with much tenderness and courtesy, that men of candour made great allowance for the decay of my faculties; and did not expect me to write now, either with regard to sentiment or language, as I did thirty or forty years ago. Perhaps they are decayed; though I am not conscious of it. But is not this a fit occasion to explain myself concerning the style which I use from choice, not necessity? I *could* even now write as floridly and rhetorically as even the admired Dr. B——; but I dare not; because I seek the honour that cometh from God only. What is the praise of man to *me*, that have one foot in the grave, and am stepping into the land whence I shall not return? Therefore, I dare no more write in a *fine style* than wear a fine coat. But were it otherwise, had I time to spare, I should still write just as I do. I should purposely decline, what many admire, a highly ornamental style. I cannot admire French oratory; I despise it from my heart. Let those that please be in raptures at the pretty, elegant sentences of Massillon or Bourdaloue; but give me the plain nervous style of Dr. South, Dr. Bates, or Mr. John Howe; and, for elegance, show me any French writer who exceeds Dean Young, or Mr. Seed. Let who will admire the French frippery, I am still for plain sound English.

"I think a preacher or writer of sermons has lost his way, when he imitates any of the French orators; even the most famous of them; even Massillon or Bourdaloue. Only let his language be plain, proper, and clear; and it is enough. God Himself has told us how to speak, both as to the matter and manner: 'If any man speak' in the name of God, 'let him speak as the oracles of God'; and if he would imitate any part

1788 Age 85 of these above the rest, let it be the First Epistle of St. John. This is the style, the most excellent style, for every gospel preacher. And let him aim at no more ornament than he finds in that sentence, which is the sum of the whole gospel, 'We love Him, because He first loved us.'"

Wesley's journal for the first two months of 1788 is lost; but existing letters show, that the time was spent in London. The following have not hitherto been published; and, though brief, refer to two subjects of the highest interest,—Sunday-schools and cottage prayer-meetings. The first was addressed to Duncan Wright, who was now at Bolton; the second to William Simpson, at Stockton upon Tees.

"LONDON, *January* 9, 1788.

"DEAR DUNCAN,—You send me a comfortable account of the work of God in your circuit. I cannot doubt but a blessing redounds to you all for the sake of the poor children. I verily think, these Sunday-schools are one of the noblest specimens of charity, which have been set on foot in England since the time of William the Conqueror.

"If Michael Fenwick has a mind to go to Dumfries and assist Robert Dall, you may give him three guineas, which he must husband well. He may write to me from thence.

"I am, dear Duncan, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

"LONDON, *January* 18, 1788.

"DEAR BILLY,—You did exceeding well to enlarge the number of prayer-meetings, and to fix them in serious courts. I do not know that any means of grace whatever has been more owned of God than this.

"It is not now, but at the time of conference, that children are received into Kingswood school.

"I am glad sister Moor has not forgotten me. I hope sister Middleton also thinks of me sometimes. You are welcome to the four volumes of sermons.

"I am, dear Billy, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Charles Wesley was now dying. Long, loving, and faithful had been the friendship between the two brothers. Their opinions had often differed; but their affection had never failed. Their most serious difference had been on the subject of separation from the Church of England, ordinations, and the administration of the sacraments; but, even on these matters, Charles, while writing strongly, never

wrote unbrotherly. His last letter, in our possession, on these disputed topics, is as follows. 1788 Age 85

"*April* 9, 1787.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I served West Street chapel on Friday and Sunday. Next Saturday, I propose to sleep in your bed. Stand to your own proposal: 'Let us agree to differ.' I leave America and Scotland to your latest thoughts and recognitions; only observing now, that you are exactly right. Keep your authority while you live; and, after your death, *detur digniori*, or rather, *dignioribus*. You cannot settle the succession: you cannot divine how God will settle it. Have the people of —— given you leave to die, E. A. P. J.?[1]

"I am, etc.,

"C. WESLEY."[2]

It would almost seem from this, that Charles was disposed to abandon his objections to the ordinations for America and Scotland; but, be that as it may, we have here some of his last thoughts respecting the Methodists. He evidently believed that, after his brother's death, they would exist as a separated people, and he wished them to be governed by those of themselves who were worthiest.

Wesley loved his brother, and on February 18, 1788, addressed to him the following laconic note.

"DEAR BROTHER,—You must go out every day, or die. Do not die to save charges. You certainly need not want anything as long as I live.

"JOHN WESLEY."[3]

Ten days after this, Wesley left London, for his long northern journey, saying: "If I see it again, well; if not, I pray God to raise up others, that will be more faithful and more successful in His work! I find, by an increase of years, (1) Less activity; I walk slower, particularly up hill: (2) My memory is not so quick: (3) I cannot read so well by candle-light. But, I bless God, that all my other powers of body and mind remain just what they were."

A month later, Wesley's brother had entered into rest. They had parted, not to meet again till they met in heaven.

[1] Four letters, standing for *Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter Johannes*: "John, presbyter of the Church of England." Wesley, in early life, sometimes used this signature in writing to his brother.

[2] Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 359.

[3] Jackson's Life of C. Wesley, vol. ii., p. 437.

1788 Age 85 Wesley, however, thought that his brother might recover. Hence the following, written on March 2.

"DEAR BROTHER,—Many inquire after you, and express much affection, and desire of seeing you. In good time! You are first suffering the will of God. Afterwards, He has a little more for you to do: that is, provided you now take up your cross, (for that it frequently must be,) and go out, at least, an hour in a day. I would not blame you, if it were two or three. Never mind expense. I can make that up. You shall not die to save charges. Peace be with all your spirits!

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Three days later he wrote again.

"*March* 5, 1788.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I hope you keep to your rule, of going out every day, although it may sometimes be a cross. Keep to this but one month, and I am persuaded you will be as well as you were at this time twelvemonth. Adieu!

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Here, with one exception, epistolary correspondence between the two brothers ceased. Charles was too feeble to continue it, and his daughter became his substitute. In reply to one of her letters, Wesley wrote as follows.

"BRISTOL, *March* 7, 1788.

"MY DEAR SALLY,—When my appetite was entirely gone, so that all I could take at dinner was a roasted turnip, it was restored in a few days, by riding out daily, after taking ten drops of elixir of vitriol in a glass of water. It is highly probable, that would have the same effect in my brother's case. But, in the mean time, I wish he would see Dr. Whitehead. I am persuaded there is not such another physician in England; although, to confound human wisdom, he does not know how to cure his own wife.

"He must lie in bed as little as possible in the daytime; otherwise it will hinder his sleeping at night.

"Now, Sally, tell your brothers from me, that their tenderly respectful behaviour to their father, (even to asking his pardon, if in anything they have offended him,) will be the best cordial for him under heaven. I know not but they may save his life thereby. To know nothing will be wanting, on your part, gives great satisfaction to, my dear Sally,

"Yours very affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."[3]

[1] Jackson's Life of C. Wesley, vol. ii., p. 438.
[2] Ibid. p. 438. [3] Ibid. p. 439.

To Samuel Bradburn, now stationed in London, Wesley addressed the following hitherto unpublished letter. 1788 Age 85

"BRISTOL, *March* 13, 1788.

"DEAR SAMMY,—With regard to my brother, I advise you: (1) Whether he will or no, (at least, if not done already,) carry Dr. Whitehead to him. (2) If he cannot go out, and yet must have exercise or die, persuade him to use ——— twice or thrice a day, and procure one for him. (3) I earnestly advise him to be electrified; not shocked, but only filled with electric fire. (4) Inquire if he has made his will, though I think it scarcely possible he should have delayed it.

"The tunes, which brother Rhodes left with you, should be immediately printed in the cheap form. Kind love to Sophy.

"I am, dear Sammy, your affectionate friend and brother,

"J. WESLEY."

Four days later, Wesley wrote his last letter to his brother.

"BRISTOL, *March* 17, 1788.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I am just setting out on my northern journey, but must snatch time to write two or three lines. I stand and admire the wise and gracious dispensations of Divine providence! Never was there before so loud a call to all that are under your roof. If they have not hitherto sufficiently regarded either you, or the God of their fathers, what is more calculated to convince them, than to see you so long hovering upon the borders of the grave? And, I verily believe, if they receive the admonition, God will raise you up again. I know you have the sentence of death in yourself: so had I more than twelve years ago. I know nature is utterly exhausted: but is not nature subject to His word? I do not depend upon physicians, but upon Him that raiseth the dead. Only let your whole family stir themselves up, and be instant in prayer; then I have only to say to each, 'If thou canst believe, thou shalt see the glory of God!' Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Adieu!

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Another letter must be inserted, written three days after the above, to his niece, Miss Wesley.

"WORCESTER, *March* 20, 1788.

"MY DEAR SALLY,—Mr. Whitefield had, for a considerable time, thrown up all the food he took. I advised him to slit a large onion across the grain, and bind it warm on the pit of his stomach. He vomited no more. Pray apply this to my brother's stomach, the next time he eats.

"One in Yorkshire, who was dying for want of food, as she threw up all she took, was saved by the following means: Boil crusts of white

[1] Jackson's Life of C. Wesley, vol. ii., p. 440.

1788 bread to the consistence of a jelly; add a few drops of lemon juice, and
Age 85 a little loaf sugar; take a spoonful once or twice an hour. By all means, let him try this.

"If neither of these avail, (which I think will not be the case,) remember the lady at Paris, who lived several weeks without swallowing a grain, by applying thin slices of beef to the stomach.

"But, above all, let prayer be made continually; and, probably, he will be stronger after this illness than he has been these ten years. Is anything too hard for God? On Sunday I am to be at Birmingham; on Sunday sennight, at Madeley. My dear Sally, adieu!

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Nine days after this, on March 29, Charles Wesley died. It is a curious incident, that Wesley, at the time, was preaching in Shropshire, and (as was afterwards ascertained) he and his congregation, at the very moment of his brother's exit, were singing:

"Come let us join our friends above,
That have obtained the prize,
And, on the eagle wings of love,
To joys celestial rise:
Let all the saints terrestrial sing,
With those to glory gone;
For all the servants of our King,
In earth and heaven, are one.

One family we dwell in Him,
One church, above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream, of death:
One army of the living God,
To His command we bow;
Part of His host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing *now*."[2]

Samuel Bradburn, the assistant in the City Road circuit, immediately dispatched a letter to Wesley, informing him of his brother's death; but, in consequence of its being misdirected, it failed to reach him till April 4, the day before the burial. Wesley was at Macclesfield, and to get to London in time for the funeral was impossible. Hence the following letter to the bereaved widow.

[1] Jackson's Life of C. Wesley, vol. ii., p. 441.
[2] "The Allens of Shiney Row," p. 59.

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"MACCLESFIELD, *April* 4, 1788.

"DEAR SISTER,—Half an hour ago, I received a letter from Mr. Bradburn, informing me of my brother's death. For eleven or twelve days before, I had not one line concerning him. The last I had was from Charles, which I delayed to answer, expecting every day to receive some further information. We have only now to learn that great lesson, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!' If it had been necessary, in order to serve either him or you, I should not have thought much of coming up to London. Indeed, to serve you, or your dear family, in anything that is in my power, will always be a pleasure to, dear sister, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Wesley had no disposition to tell the deep sorrows of his heart; but that he severely felt the departure of his brother, there can be no question. A fortnight afterwards, when at Bolton, he attempted to give out, as his second hymn, the one beginning with the words, "Come, O Thou Traveller unknown"; but when he came to the lines,—

"My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with Thee,"—

the bereaved old man sunk beneath emotion which was uncontrollable, burst into a flood of tears, sat down in the pulpit, and hid his face with his hands. The crowded congregation well knew the cause of his speechless excitement; singing ceased; and the chapel became a Bochim. At length, Wesley recovered himself, rose again, and went through a service which was never forgotten by those who were present at it.[2]

Wesley intended to write his brother's life, and began to collect materials for it; but his other engagements were too numerous to admit of the fulfilment of his purpose. The following is the obituary published in the conference minutes.

"Mr. CHARLES WESLEY, who, after spending fourscore years with much sorrow and pain, quietly retired into Abraham's bosom. He had no disease; but, after a gradual decay of some months,

'The weary wheels of life stood still at last.'

His least praise was his talent for poetry; although Dr. Watts did not scruple to say, that that single poem, 'Wrestling Jacob,' was worth all the verses he himself had written."

[1] Jackson's Life of C. Wesley, vol. ii., p. 442.
[2] *Methodist Recorder*, Dec. 5, 1861.

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This is not the place, nor indeed have we room for it, to write a critique on the life and character of this remarkable man. It would be easy to give the opinions of those who knew him,—Whitehead, Moore, Coke, Bradburn, Clarke, and Pawson,—some in favour, and others to the contrary. Suffice it to say, that, had he done nothing more than furnish the Methodists, and the church of Christ generally, with his incomparable hymns, in which so many millions have devoutly worshipped the God of heaven, he would have rendered service to the cause of truth and piety which no language can adequately describe. His "hymns, and psalms, and spiritual songs," for a hundred and thirty years, have been the metrical liturgy of the people called Methodists, and to them countless multitudes have been indebted for not a few of their richest blessings.

True to his high church principles, Charles Wesley, instead of selecting the burial ground of his brother's chapel in City Road, desired to be interred in the consecrated churchyard of St. Marylebone. This, to Wesley, was a painful disappointment. "It is a pity," said he, in a letter to the Rev. Peard Dickenson, "but the remains of my brother had been deposited with mine. Certainly that ground is holy as any in England; and it contains a large quantity of 'bonny dead.'"[1] So deeply did he feel this, that, seven weeks after his brother's funeral, he wrote an article, at Dumfries, on the consecration of churches and burial grounds, which he published in his magazine; and in which, after showing, that there is no law of England, or of the English Church, enjoining such a practice, he remarks:

"Neither is it enjoined by the law of God. Where do we find one word, in the New Testament, enjoining any such thing? Neither do I remember any precedent of it in the purest ages of the church. It seems to have entered, and gradually spread itself, with the other innovations and superstitions of the Church of Rome. For this reason, I never wished that any bishop should consecrate any chapel or burial ground of mine. Indeed, I should not dare to suffer it; as I am clearly persuaded the thing is wrong in itself, being not authorised either by any law of God, or by any law of the land. In consequence of which, I conceive, that either the clerk or the sexton may as well consecrate the church, or the churchyard, as the bishop. With regard to the latter, I know not

[1] Jackson's Life of C. Wesley, vol. ii., p. 445.

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who could answer that plain question: You say, 'This is *consecrated ground*, so many feet *broad*, and so many *long*'; but pray how *deep* is it? 'Deep! what does that signify?' Oh, a great deal! for if my grave be dug too *deep*, I may happen to get out of the *consecrated ground!* And who can tell, what unhappy consequences may follow from this! I take the whole of this practice to be a mere relic of Romish superstition. And I wonder, that any sensible protestant should think it right to countenance it; much more that any reasonable man should plead for the necessity of it! Surely it is high time now, that we should be guided, not by custom, but by Scripture and reason."[1]

This was a heavy blow at his brother's prejudice. Wesley himself resolved to be buried in the ground connected with the chapel in the City Road, and he wished his brother to be buried with him. To this Charles objected, because the ground had not been *consecrated by a bishop!* The objection was foolish; and the burial, in another place, occasioned considerable gossip. John Pawson, in a letter dated April 28, 1788, remarks: "Charles Wesley would not be buried at the new chapel, because it was not consecrated; nor by any of our ministers, but by one of his own choosing. He sent for the parson of the parish where he lived, and said: 'Sir, whatever the world may have thought of me, I have lived, and I die, in the communion of the Church of England, and I will be buried in the yard of my parish church.'"[2] Wesley well knew that remarks like these were current; and he owed it to his people to publish his thoughts on a subject, which, however insignificant in itself, was not unlikely to be a gossiping gangrene in his societies.

Wesley's affection for his brother was evinced in the continued kindness exercised towards his brother's family. According to his own account book, he gave to them, in this the year of their bereavement, at least, two hundred guineas. He also assured his brother's widow that, as long as he lived, he would help her to the utmost of his power. The two following letters may fitly draw the curtain on Charles Wesley's death and burial.

"*July* 25, 1788.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—You know well what a regard I had for Miss Gwynne, before she was Mrs. Wesley. And it had not ceased from that

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1788, p. 543.
[2] Manuscript letter.

1788 Age 85 time till now. I am persuaded it never will. Therefore, I will speak without reserve just what comes into my mind. I have sometimes thought you are a little like me. My wife used to tell me, 'My dear, you are too generous. You don't know the value of money.' I could not wholly deny the charge. Possibly, you may sometimes lean to the same extreme. I know you are of a generous spirit. You have an open heart, and an open hand. But may it not sometimes be too open, more so than your circumstances will allow? Is it not an instance of Christian, as well as worldly, prudence, to cut our coat according to our cloth? If your circumstances are a little narrower, should you not contract your expenses too? I need but just give you this hint, which I doubt not you will take kindly from, my dear Sally,

"Your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

"*December* 21, 1788.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—It is undoubtedly true, that some silly people, (whether in the society or not I cannot tell,) have frequently talked in that manner, both of my brother and me. They have said, that we were well paid for our labours. And, indeed, so we were, but not by man. Yet, this is no more than we were to expect, especially from busybodies in other men's matters. And it is no more possible to restrain their tongues, than it is to bind up the wind. But it is sufficient for us, that our own conscience condemned us not; and that our record is with the Most High.

"What has concerned me more than this idle slander is a trial of another kind. I supposed, when John Atlay left me, that he had left me one or two hundred pounds beforehand. On the contrary, I am one or two hundred pounds behindhand, and shall not recover myself till after Christmas. Some of the first moneys I receive, I shall set apart for you; and in everything that is in my power, you may depend upon the willing assistance of,

"Dear Sally, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

We must now return to Wesley's journal. On the last day in February, he left London, for Bath and Bristol. The mayor of Bristol invited him to preach in the civic church, which invitation he accepted. His worship and most of the aldermen were present; and Wesley, fearing no man's frown, and courting no man's favour, took for his text the fearful narrative of the rich man and Lazarus; and then dined, with the rich men, at the rich man's table, in the mansion house. The most remarkable incident, however, occurred in his own

[1] Jackson's Life of C. Wesley, vol. ii., p. 449. [2] Ibid.

chapel on Thursday evening, the 6th of March. At that time, one of the great questions of the day was the subject of slavery; and Wesley had announced his intention to preach on it. The chapel, in consequence, was densely crowded, with both rich and poor. Wesley selected as his text, "God shall enlarge Japheth: and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem: and Canaan shall be his servant." The rest we give in the words of Wesley himself. He writes: 1788 Age 85

"About the middle of the discourse, while there was on every side attention still as night, a vehement noise arose, none could tell why, and shot like lightning through the congregation. The terror and confusion were inexpressible. You might have imagined it was a city taken by storm. The people rushed upon each other with the utmost violence; the benches were broken in pieces; and nine tenths of the congregation appeared to be struck with the same panic. In about six minutes, the storm ceased, almost as suddenly as it rose; and, all being calm, I went on without the least interruption. It was the strangest incident of the kind I ever remember; and, I believe, none can account for it, without supposing some præternatural influence. Satan fought, lest his kingdom should be delivered up. We set the next day apart as a day of fasting and prayer, that God would remember those poor outcasts of men," [the slaves,] "and make a way for them to escape, and break their chains asunder."

The sceptic will sneer at Wesley's solution; but, before he does so, he ought himself to supply a better. Opinions respecting this mysterious commotion will be different; but all parties will unite in admiring Wesley's sympathy with the suffering slave. Wesley was the first Englishman who appointed a fast day to pray that slavery might cease.

On the 17th of March, Wesley set out on his journey to the north. Everywhere he had enormous congregations; and frequently was obliged, in wintry weather, to preach in the open air. Mrs. Fletcher, at Madeley, wrote: "I could not but discern a great change in him. His soul seems far more sunk into God, and such an unction attends his word, that each sermon was indeed spirit and life."[1]

Exactly eight weeks were occupied in reaching the Scottish border; and, during this interval, Wesley preached more than eighty sermons, in fifty-seven different towns and villages. In seven instances, all in Yorkshire, he preached in churches.

[1] Mrs. Fletcher's Life, p. 251.

1788 Age 85 The crowds were greater than ever; and, almost in every place he visited, he found the work of God progressing.

On the 13th of May, Wesley visited Dumfries, where he had stationed Robert Dall, at the conference of 1787. Dumfries was without a chapel, and without a society; but Mr. Dall had just the sort of energy which such a place required; and Wesley knew it. The following letters to his home missionary have not before been published.

"LONDON, *December* 1, 1787.

"DEAR ROBERT,—You have reason to praise God, who has prospered you, and given you to see the fruit of your labours. Our all dispensing God has called us to preach the plain gospel. I am glad your hands are strengthened in corresponding with the brethren. I will desire any to change with you when you see it best, and, if I live till spring, please God, I will visit you at Dumfries.

"I am, with love to sister Dall, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

"LONDON, *February* 11, 1788.

"DEAR ROBERT,—I allow you to build at Dumfries, providing any one will lend a hundred guineas on interest.

"I hope to see you, God willing, in May.

"I am, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Robert Dall was one of Wesley's favourites, and so was his Christian wife, to whom, said Wesley, in another unpublished letter now before us, "God has given both sense and grace." This godly couple set all their energies to work; and, by begging of their friends in all parts of the United Kingdom, succeeded, in three months, in building the unique chapel which Wesley describes below. The effort was regarded as gigantic; and Wesley's visit was a sort of triumphant top stone to the whole affair. "Such," writes Mrs. Gordon Playdell to Mr. Dall, "such was the general prejudice against Mr. Wesley, that I really feared his coming would end your hopeful prosperity; but God has disappointed all my fears, and outdone all my hopes. The popularity, which met him here, was marvellous. The turn in his favour was such as none but God could have brought about. You have been all along respected, and the esteem for you grows more and more. Your pious, unwearied attentions to the poor criminals have increased the general regard for you, and your

sermons in the jail been much approved."[1] "Mr. Wesley," wrote Charles Atmore, "was much pleased with Dumfries and you. He has given you a place in his journal, and what you have done at Dumfries will be a memorial of you to all generations." 1788 Age 85

We could quote a large number of other letters relative to the same subject; but the above is a sufficient preface to the following racy extract from Wesley's journal.

"May 13—To-day, we went through lovely roads to Dumfries. Robert Dall soon found me out. He has behaved exceeding well, and done much good here: but he is a bold man; he has begun building a preaching house, larger than any in Scotland, except those in Glasgow and Edinburgh! In the evening, I preached abroad in a convenient street, on one side of the town. Rich and poor attended from every quarter, of whatever denomination; and every one seemed to hear for life. Surely the Scots are the best hearers in Europe! At five, next morning, I was importuned to preach in the preaching house; but such an one I never saw before. It had no windows at all: so that, although the sun shone bright, we could see nothing without candles."

Wesley's next halting place was Glasgow. It had been widely reported, by some of the Scottish ministers, that he was about to publish a new edition of the Bible, and to leave out part of the Epistle to the Romans, St. John's Apocalypse, and other portions of the inspired writings;[2] but, notwithstanding this, says Charles Atmore, in the letter before quoted, "he was far better received in Glasgow than ever."

Here he spent three days; preached six sermons; gave an account concerning the rise and progress of Methodism; and ordained John Barber.[3]

Speaking of the Glasgow chapel, Wesley writes: "It will contain about as many as the chapel at Bath. But oh the difference! It has the pulpit on one side; and has exactly the look of a presbyterian meeting-house. It is the very sister of our house at Brentford. Perhaps an omen of what will be when I am gone."

In his address on Methodism, which was delivered to the congregation, he remarked:

"There is no other religious society under heaven, which requires

[1] Manuscript letter. [2] J. Pawson's manuscript letter.
[3] *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 111.

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nothing of men in order to their admission into it, but a desire to save their souls. Look all around you, you cannot be admitted into the church, or society of the presbyterians, anabaptists, quakers, or any others, unless you hold the same opinions with them, and adhere to the same mode of worship. The Methodists alone do not insist on your holding this or that opinion; but they think and let think. Neither do they impose any particular mode of worship; but you may continue to worship in your former manner, be it what it may. Now, I do not know any other religious society, either ancient or modern, wherein such liberty of conscience is now allowed, or has been allowed, since the age of the apostles. Here is our glorying; and a glorying peculiar to us. What society shares it with us?"

From Glasgow, Wesley went to Edinburgh, where he wrote: "I still find a frankness and openness in the people of Edinburgh, which I find in few other parts of the kingdom. I spent two days among them with much satisfaction; and I was not at all disappointed, in finding no such increase, either in the congregation or the society, as many expected from their leaving the kirk."

Wesley here recognises the Edinburgh Methodists as a *separated* people, in other words, a *church;* but adroitly intimates, that the result was not equal to what many of his friends had ventured to expect. How stands the case? In 1766, when the numbers were first given, Edinburgh circuit had 165 members of society, who, in the next four years, dwindled to 62. Then the circuit rallied, and, in four years more, the numbers rose to 287. In the next quadrennial period, we find them reduced to 161. In 1785, when the ordinations for Scotland took place, Edinburgh had 134 Methodists; now, in 1788, it had 330; which, however, at Wesley's death in 1791, were reduced to 205. These are curious statistics; and help to cast light on Wesley's meaning.

On May 25, Wesley reached Newcastle, which, for the next fortnight, was the centre of his labours. Two incidents, in connection with this visit, are worth recording.

Three years before, John Hampson, jun., greatly offended, had relinquished the itinerancy, and was now a clergyman at Sunderland. Strangely enough, Hampson invited Wesley to occupy his pulpit, and Wesley willingly accepted the invitation. The church was crowded both morning and afternoon.

The other incident occurred at Stanhope, famed "for nothing but a very uncommon degree of wickedness." The preaching place was an upper room, and the congregation large. Presently, the main beam, that supported the room, gave way, and a frightful hubbub followed. "One man," says Wesley, "leaped out of the window; the rest quietly went out; and nothing was hurt except a poor dog beneath the window. I then preached in the open air, to twice or thrice as many as the room would have contained, who were all attention." This, which might have been a serious catastrophe, happened at five o'clock on a summer's morning. 1788 Age 85

On the 9th of June, Wesley left Newcastle for the south. Reaching Darlington, he writes:

"Margaret Barlow came to me; and I asked her abundance of questions. I was soon convinced, that she was not only sincere, but deep in grace; and, therefore, incapable of deceit. I was convinced likewise, that she had frequent intercourse with a spirit that appeared to her in the form of an angel. I know not how to judge of the rest. Her account was:—'For above a year, I have seen this angel, whose face is exceeding beautiful: her raiment white as snow, and glistering like silver; her voice unspeakably soft and musical. She tells me many things before they come to pass. She foretold I should be ill at such a time, in such a manner, and well at such an hour; and it was so exactly. She has said, such a person shall die at such a time; and he did so. Above two months ago, she told me your brother was dead; (I did not know you had a brother;) and that he was in heaven. And some time since, she told me, you will die in less than a year. But what she has most earnestly and frequently told me, is, that God will, in a short time, be avenged on obstinate sinners, and will destroy them with fire from heaven.'"

Wesley adds:

"Whether this will be so or no, I cannot tell; but when we were alone there was a wonderful power in her words; and, as the Indian said to David Brainerd, 'They did good to my heart.' It is above a year since this girl was visited in this manner, being then between fourteen and fifteen years old. But she was then quite a womanish girl, and of unblamable behaviour. Suppose that which appeared to her was really an angel; yet from the face, the voice, and the apparel, she might easily mistake him for a female; and this mistake is of little consequence. Much good has already resulted from this odd event; and is likely to ensue; provided those who believe, and those who disbelieve, her report, have but patience with each other."

Marvellous! Who was Margaret Barlow? The answer involves an episode in Methodistic history.

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In the conference minutes for 1778, John Blades is reported as one of Wesley's itinerant preachers on trial; but, beyond this, he is never mentioned. Blades was a native of Northumberland, a weakminded fanatic, totally unfit for the itinerant work. Perhaps, for this reason, he was not appointed to a circuit. For some years, however, he acted, in the capacity of a local preacher, in the north of England. He then began to preach consummate nonsense respecting the privileges of believers, and, with such success that, when he left the Methodists in 1784, he was enabled to form separate societies in a large number of places in the county of Durham, and in the north of Yorkshire. Among his followers, who were called *Bladonians*,[1] was Ralph Hodgson, a miller at West Auckland, in whose house Margaret Barlow was a servant. We have before us a long unpublished letter, written by this dusty enthusiast, only a fortnight before Wesley's interview with his servant girl at Darlington. It is addressed to "Mr. Richard Steel, Tanner, Wolsingham. With all possible speed": and is dated, May 27, 1788. Hodgson tells his friend Steel that an angel from the Lord had appeared to him, and stated that the "wicked were about to be destroyed from off the face of the earth." He also urges Steel to join with him in making this angelic revelation as widely known as possible.

It is a curious fact that Hodgson waited upon Wesley at Newcastle, for the purpose of converting him to his opinions; and that he accompanied his clairvoyant servant, Margaret Barlow, to meet Wesley at the house of Thomas Pickering, at Darlington. He also wrote a long letter, dated "West Auckland, October 26, 1788," to the Rev. Mr. Agutter, St. Mary Magdalen college, Oxford, in which he informed that gentleman that Margaret Barlow had been his servant about two years; that she had attended the services of the Methodists; that an angel had appeared to her in the form of a female, and with a lustre brighter than the light of a thousand candles; that the angel had come to her in the daytime as well as night; and had made known to her the state of many who were dead, as well as many who were still alive; but that

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1797, p. 553.

the principal matter, which the angel had revealed, was the exact day when the wicked would be destroyed. Margaret also had been much disturbed by the appearance of two evil spirits, both clad in black, and wearing horns; but the recital of her visions had produced effects great and blessed. 1788 Age 85

What was the result of all this religious raving? Margaret, at length, announced the exact day when the destruction of the wicked was to be accomplished. Intense excitement followed. Some sold their clothing and property, and distributed the proceeds among the poor; and others exulted at the thought of the possessions of the wicked being distributed among themselves. The day came, numbers having sat up all night to watch its dawning. Portentous signs appeared. The heavens gathered blackness, lightnings flashed, and thunders roared. At Barnardcastle it was the day of the weekly market. The people were frantic, some with hope, and some with fear. Cries were heard, "It is coming! It is coming!" The business of the market was suspended; and consternation was general. At length, the clouds were scattered, the heavens brightened, the day passed over, and all things continued as they were. The bubble burst; Blades, Hodgson, his wife, and Margaret Barlow were discredited, and fled across the Atlantic; where most, if not all of them, joined the shakers, whose principles and morals, to say the least, were capable of great improvement.

The reader will excuse this lengthened digression concerning a mad miller and his servant maid. We have purposely omitted the numerous stories, of a similar description, which Wesley has inserted in his journal and magazine; but one instance seemed necessary, to illustrate what was unquestionably a feature in Wesley's character,—excessive credulity in receiving doubtful proofs of the existence and nearness of an unseen world of spirits. We are not inclined to say hard things concerning this. It was a weakness, but not a sin. Besides, though some of the stories, referred to, were ridiculously foolish, it would be rashness to deny that some of the others were strictly and startlingly true. And further, we honestly declare that, in an age like this, when the general tendency is to scepticism rather than to credulity, we should hail, as no bad omen, the appearance of a disposition, like that of

1788 Age 85 Wesley, to cherish, not denounce, any and every evidence of another and future state of being.

On leaving Darlington, Wesley proceeded to Whitby, where he was advertised to open a new chapel; but, as often happens now, when the day arrived, the building was far from being ready. For want of stairs, the people had to be admitted to the gallery through one of the back windows near the pulpit; and, for want of a gallery front, a number of stalwart Yorkshiremen squatted themselves all round the gallery ledge, their backs protecting the people behind them, and their feet dangling over the heads of those below.[1] Wesley writes:

"June 13, Friday.—At eight, I preached to a lovely congregation at Stokesley; and, at eleven, in Guisborough, to one far larger. In the evening, I preached at Whitby, in the new house, thoroughly filled above and below. The unfinished galleries, having as yet no fronts, were frightful to look upon. It is the most curious house we have in England. You go up to it by about forty steps; and have then before you a lofty front, I judge, near fifty feet high, and fifty-four feet broad."

Wesley spent the next two days in Whitby, preaching twice on Saturday, and thrice on Sunday, and finishing up with a Yorkshire lovefeast.

From the "*plain people at Whitby*," Wesley went to the Scarborough *elegants;* and thence to Bridlington, Malton, Beverley, and Hull. In the last mentioned town, Joseph Benson and the Methodists had recently erected George Yard chapel, an edifice of which Benson was immensely proud, and whose account of its opening services, six months before, drew from Wesley the following laconic letter.

"DEAR JOSEPH,—I greatly rejoice in the erection of your new preaching house; and in the tokens of the Divine presence with which you and the people were favoured at the opening; but if it be at all equal to the new chapel in London, I will engage to eat it.

"I am, yours affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Wesley's new chapel in City Road was his *beau idéal*, and great was his jealousy of all pretentious competitors; but

[1] Memoir of Mrs. Knaggs.

[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1836, p. 492.

still he was obliged to acknowledge, that even George Yard chapel, Hull, was "well built, and elegantly finished; handsome, but not gaudy." 1788 Age 85

During his stay in Hull, he preached twice in the high church, by the invitation of the vicar, Mr. Clark; and thrice in Benson's pet chapel.

Notwithstanding his three heavy services on the previous day, Wesley, an old man, in the eighty-fifth year of his age, set out on June 23, and not only travelled all the way from Hull to York, but, preached four sermons in four different towns and villages.

At York a happy reconciliation was brought about. Wesley had been greatly annoyed with Robert Spence for publishing the "York Hymn Book"; and Robert had been so grieved by Wesley's strictures as to be strongly tempted to leave the Methodists. Wesley and the grand old Methodist at York, however, were not the men to harbour malice; and, by appointment, the offending bookseller breakfasted with Wesley, *at three o'clock* in the morning, and all past differences were consigned to the shades of charitable oblivion.[1]

A three o'clock breakfast! And yet, this, with Wesley, was not at all unusual. His energy, diligence, and punctuality were marvellous. Addressing his coachman, at this early breakfast in the city of York, he said, "Have the carriage at the door at four. I do not mean a quarter or five minutes past, but four." The man knew what his master meant; and, as the minster clock struck four, Wesley had shaken hands with Robert Spence, and was entering his chaise.[2] Railways, since then, have helped to make some men punctual; but Wesley was perfect in this human excellence long before railway engines began to whistle.

Wesley made his way to Epworth, where he spent his birthday. He writes:

"June 28.—I this day enter on my eighty-fifth year[3]: and what cause have I to praise God, as for a thousand spiritual blessings, so, for bodily blessings also! How little have I suffered yet by 'the rush of numerous

[1] Memoirs of Spence, p. 26. [2] Ibid.
[3] It ought to have been *eighty-sixth.*

1788 years!' It is true, I am not so agile as I was in times past. I do not
Age 85 run or walk so fast as I did; my sight is a little decayed; my left eye is grown dim, and hardly serves me to read; I have daily some pain in the ball of my right eye, as also in my right temple, (occasioned by a blow received some months since,) and in my right shoulder and arm, which I impute partly to a sprain, and partly to the rheumatism. I find, likewise, some decay in my memory, with regard to names and things lately past; but not at all with regard to what I have read or heard twenty, forty, or sixty years ago; neither do I find any decay in my hearing, smell, taste, or appetite; (though I want but a third part of the food I did once;) nor do I feel any such thing as weariness, either in travelling or preaching; and I am not conscious of any decay in writing sermons; which I do as readily, and I believe, as correctly, as ever.

"To what cause can I impute this, that I am as I am? First, doubtless, to the power of God, fitting me for the work to which I am called, as long as He pleases to continue me therein; and, next, subordinately to this, to the prayers of His children.

"May we not impute it, as inferior means, (1) To my constant exercise and change of air? (2) To my never having lost a night's sleep, sick or well, at land or at sea, since I was born? (3) To my having sleep at command; so that, whenever I feel myself almost worn out, I call it, and it comes, day or night? (4) To my having constantly, for above sixty years, risen at four in the morning? (5) To my constant preaching at five in the morning, for above fifty years? (6) To my having had so little pain in my life; and so little sorrow, or anxious care?

"Even now, though I find pain daily in my eye, or temple, or arm; yet it is never violent, and seldom lasts many minutes at a time. Whether or not this is sent to give me warning, that I am shortly to quit this tabernacle, I do not know; but be it one way or the other, I have only to say,

'My remnant of days
I spend to His praise,
Who died the whole world to redeem:
Be they many or few,
My days are His due,
And they all are devoted to Him.'"

Wesley's two texts on this memorable birthday were appropriate. Here, eighty-five years before, he had been born, in the Epworth parsonage; and now, in the morning, he preached from, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom"; and, in the evening, from, "Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work

which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." 1788 Age 85

This may be a fitting place to insert a selection from Wesley's letters, written in the previous six months.

The first was addressed to William Black, one of his missionaries in Nova Scotia. Black had related to Wesley the cases of certain demoniacs, and particularly one which he himself had seen. When Black approached, it was with the utmost difficulty that four men could hold the poor wretch, and prevent him doing the missionary serious injury. Black immediately fell upon his knees, and began to pray. In an instant, the frenzy of the man subsided; and the lips, that a few moments before had uttered blasphemy, began to syllable the praises of the great Redeemer. Wesley's letter is as follows.

"GLOUCESTER, *March* 19, 1788.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am glad to find you are still going on in the glorious work to which you are called. We have need to make haste therein; to use all diligence. For the work is great; the day is short; and lonely is the night wherein no man can work.

"It is well that Satan is constrained to show himself so plainly in the case of those poor demoniacs. Thereby, he weakens his own kingdom, and excites us to assault him more zealously. In the beginning of the work in England and Ireland, we had many cases of the kind. But he now chooses to assault us by subtlety more than by strength.

"I wish you would do all you possibly can to keep our brethren in peace with each other. Your pains will not be lost on poor John McGeary. There is much good in him. Indeed, he is naturally of a bold, forward temper; but I hope his zeal is now according to knowledge.

"Praying that you may increase with all the increase of God, I am your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

The next is brief, but interesting. Agnes Collinson was now a remarkable child, twelve years old. Six years afterwards, she became the wife of Mr. Joseph Bulmer; and lived to be the authoress of "Messiah's Kingdom," in twelve books, 486 pages, and of the beautiful hymn, which is so often sung at the laying of the foundation stones of Methodist chapels, "Thou who hast in Zion laid," etc.

Mrs. Bulmer was born a poet, and, at the death of Charles

[1] Black's Memoirs, p. 219.

1788 Age 85 Wesley, wrote an elegy, which was sent to the surviving brother, and evoked the following characteristic letter.

"MY DEAR MAIDEN,—Beware of pride; beware of flattery; suffer none to commend you to your face; remember, one good temper is of more value, in the sight of God, than a thousand good verses. All you want is to have the mind that was in Christ, and to walk as Christ walked.

"I am, etc.,
"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

The following is now for the first time published. William Simpson, to whom it was addressed, was assistant in the Yarm circuit.

"NEAR COLNE, *April* 26, 1788.

"DEAR BILLY,—You did well to expel those who marry ungodly persons,—a real evil, which we never can tolerate. You should speak to every believer singly concerning meeting in band. There were always some in Yarm circuit, though not many. No circuit ever did, or ever will flourish, unless there are bands in the large societies. It is a good sign, that so many of our preachers are willing to contribute to those necessary expenses. They used to be much straitened in their bowels, whenever money was wanted. You have now good encouragement to remain another year in the circuit. But you know two preachers do not remain in the same circuit more than one year.

"I am, dear Billy, your affectionate friend and brother,
"JOHN WESLEY."

Dr. Coke was an innovator. Finding that many of the Dublin Methodists were in the habit of attending Dissenting chapels on the sabbath, he, in order to prevent this, directed that, on three Sundays out of four, there should be service in Whitefriar Street chapel in church hours; and that, on the fourth, the Methodists should be recommended to attend St. Patrick's church, and receive the sacrament.[2] Henry Moore was the assistant in the Dublin circuit; was nearly as old a man as Coke; and, as a preacher, his superior. Coke's assumption to act as Wesley's vicar gave great offence, and the new arrangement had to be abandoned.[3] The following letters refer to this Dublin fracas, and are not without interest, as evincing Wesley's persistent adherence to the Established

[1] Bulmer's Memoir, p. 4.
[2] Smith's "Methodism in Ireland."
[3] Ibid.

Church. The first three were addressed to Moore; the fourth to Coke. 1788 Age 85

"LEEDS, *May* 6, 1788.

"DEAR HENRY,—The doctor is too warm. He ought to have had more regard to so respectable a body of men as applied to him. I am a Church of England man; and, as I said fifty years ago, so I say still, in the Church I will live and die, unless I am thrust out. We must have no more service at Whitefriars in the church hours. Leave all contention before it be meddled with. Follow after peace.

"I am, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

"WHITEHAVEN, *May* 11, 1788.

"DEAR HENRY,—Still, the more I reflect, the more I am convinced, that the Methodists ought not to leave the Church. I judge, that to lose a thousand, yea, ten thousand, of our people, would be a less evil than this. 'But many had much comfort in this.' So they would in any *new thing*. I believe Satan himself would give them comfort herein; for he knows what the end would be. Our glory has hitherto been not to be a separate body:

'Hoc Ithacus velit.'

"But whatever Mr. Smyth does, I am for the old way. I advise you to abide in it, till you find another *new event*, although, indeed, you may expect it every day; namely, the removal of your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

"GLASGOW, *May* 12, 1788.

"DEAR HENRY,—I allow two points: 1. That, while Dr. Coke is in Dublin, he may have service at eleven o'clock as before. 2. That, on condition that our brethren will attend St. Patrick's one Sunday in four, you may read prayers the other three in the room. When Dr. Coke returns from Dublin, he should immediately send me word who is proper to succeed you there. I shall be glad, if I can, to have Nancy and you at Bristol next year. It is not unlikely, I may finish my course there; and, if so, I should love to have her to close my eyes. My brother said, I should follow him within the year. But, be that as it may, by God's help, I will live to-day.

"I am, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[3]

"GLASGOW, *May* 16, 1788.

DEAR SIR,—I came hither this morning. There is a fair opening at Dumfries, and a prospect of much good. I like your proposal concerning Joseph Cownley,[4] and will talk with him about it if I live to see Newcastle.

[1] Manuscript letters in Mission House. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.
[4] A proposal to ordain him. See *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 112.

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"As I said before, so I say still, I cannot, I dare not, leave the Church, for the reasons we all agreed to thirty years ago in the conference at Leeds. Thus far only I could go. On condition, that our people would receive the Lord's supper once a month either at St. Patrick's, or their own parish church (the reasonableness of which should be strongly and largely explained),—on this condition, I would allow Henry Moore to read the morning service at Whitefriars on the other Sundays.

"I wonder at the imprudence of Mr. Edward Smyth, to say nothing of his unkindness. You did well in changing the stewards at Waterford.

"I am, dear sir, yours most affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

The following, hitherto unpublished, letter was addressed to Thomas Taylor, then stationed at Manchester, and refers to a gigantic evil which still exists.

"NEAR NEWCASTLE, *June* 7, 1788.

"DEAR TOMMY,—I have no time to spend on controversy about the Church, unless I had leisure to write a folio.

"It is no wonder, that every one should be ruined who concerns himself with that execrable bill trade. In London, I expel every one out of our society who has anything to do with it. Whoever endorses a bill, (that is, promises to pay,) for more than he is worth, is either a fool or a knave.

"I am, dear Tommy, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

When Wesley was at Bradford, in the month of May, he preached in the parish church, and, in the course of his sermon, quoted the opinion of Bengelius, that the millennial reign of Christ would begin in the year 1836. Some one present circulated this as the opinion of Wesley himself; and, as the opinion of such a man was regarded of high importance, the rumoured prophecy ran throughout the kingdom, and more than one of Wesley's friends wrote to ask if what was said was true. The following is Wesley's reply to Christopher Hopper.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I said nothing, less or more, in Bradford church, concerning the end of the world, neither concerning my own opinion, but what follows:—That Bengelius had given it as his opinion, not that the world would then end, but, that the millennial reign of Christ would begin in the year 1836. I have no opinion at all upon the head; I can determine nothing about it. These calculations are far

[1] Manuscript letters in Mission House.

above, out of my sight. I have only one thing to do,—to save my soul, and those that hear me. 1788 Age 85

"I am, yours affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

We left Wesley celebrating his eighty-sixth birthday, in his birthplace, Epworth. Here he preached four or five sermons, held a lovefeast, and attended sacred service in his father's church. He writes:

"Mr. Gibson read the prayers with seriousness, and preached a plain, useful sermon; but I was sorry to see scarce twenty communicants, half of whom came on my account. I was informed, likewise, that scarce fifty persons used to attend the Sunday service. What can be done to remedy this sore evil? I fain would prevent the members here from leaving the Church; but I cannot do it. As Mr. Gibson is not a pious man, but rather an enemy to piety, who frequently preaches against the truth, and those that hold and love it, I cannot, with all my influence, persuade them either to hear him, or to attend the sacrament administered by him. If I cannot carry this point even while I live, who then can do it when I die? And the case of Epworth is the case of every church, where the minister neither loves nor preaches the gospel; the Methodists will not attend his administrations. What then is to be done?"

This is amusing. Here we find Wesley acknowledging, that, in the very place where his father had been rector for nearly forty years, the Methodists had, *ipso facto*, separated from the Church, and that he, with all his influence, had not sufficient power to hinder it.

During the next fortnight, Wesley preached, on an average, twice a day, until his arrival in London, on July 15. The following letters belong to this period. The first was addressed to Mr. John Mann, one of his missionaries in Nova Scotia.

"*June* 30, 1788.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am greatly concerned for the prosperity of the work of God in Nova Scotia. It seems some way to lie nearer my heart than even that in the United States; many of our brethren there are, we may hope, strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might; but I look upon those in the northern provinces to be younger, and tender children, and consequently to stand in need of our utmost care. I hope all of you, that watch over them, are exactly of one mind, and of one judgment; that you take care always to speak the same things, and to watch over one another in love.

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 298.

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"Mr. Wray is a workman that need not be ashamed. I am glad to hear of his safe arrival. Although he has not much learning,[1] he has, what is far better, uprightness of heart, and devotedness to God. I doubt not but he and you will be one, and go on your way hand in hand. Whatever opposers you meet with, Calvinists, papists, antinomians, or any other, have a particular care, that they do not take up too much either of your thoughts or time. You have better work; keep to your one point, Christ dying for us, and living in us; so will you fulfil the joy of,

"My dear brethren, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

The following was addressed to Samuel Bradburn, and, up to the present, has not been published.

"EPWORTH, *July* 6, 1788.

"DEAR SAMMY,—To-morrow evening, I hope to be at Doncaster; on Wednesday, at Sheffield; and to-morrow sennight, at London, bringing my daughter with me. That evening I should not object to preaching at West Street. On Tuesday morning, I would breakfast in Chesterfield Street, if my sister will be ready at eight o'clock. Then I must hide myself till Sunday; when I will preach at one or the other chapel for Kingswood. Peace be with you and yours!

"I am, dear Sammy, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."

The next, addressed to Mr. Jasper Winscomb, is also now for the first time printed.

"LONDON, *July* 16, 1788.

"DEAR JASPER,—If all our society at Portsmouth, or elsewhere, separate from the Church, I cannot help it. But, I will not. Therefore, I can in no wise consent to the having service in church hours. *You* used to love the Church; then keep to it, and exhort all our people to do the same. If it be true, that brother Hayter is used to talk against the other preachers, as well as against Thomas Warwick, brother Hayter and I shall not agree. Of dividing circuits we may speak at the conference.

"I am, dear Jasper, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

The following also has not before been published. It was

[1] James Wray was a member of Wesley's legalised conference. After travelling six years in English circuits, he now went, as an ordained missionary superintendent to Nova Scotia. It is a curious fact that the Nova Scotians objected to him, not only on the ground of his want of learning, but because he was *an Englishman!* On hearing of this, Wesley, in an unpublished letter, wrote: "O American gratitude! Lord, I appeal to Thee!"

[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xiv., p. 343.

addressed to "Mr. Churchey, attorney at law, near the Hay, Brecon"; and refers to certain poetical productions which Mr. Churchey wished to print. 1788 Age 85

"NEAR LONDON, *July* 22, 1788.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am glad you spoke to Mr. Cowper.[1] What pity it is that such talents as his should be employed in so useless a manner!

"Mr. Bradburn delivered your papers to me a few days ago; but this is so busy a time, that I had not leisure to go through them till to-day. *In the Translation of the Art of Printing, there are many very good lines;* but there are some that want a good deal of filing; and many that are obscure. The sense is so much clouded, that it is not easy to be understood. For many years, I have not had any booksellers, but Mr. Atlay and my assistants. *Some of the shorter copies are good sense and good poetry.*

"My dear brother has left a translation of the Book of Psalms, and verses enough to make, at least, six volumes in duodecimo. I could but ill spare him, now I am myself so far declined into the vale of years. But it is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good. Our time is now short. Let my dear sister Churchey, and you, and I make the best of it.

"I am your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

A week after the above letter was written, Wesley opened his conference, which continued its sittings till August 6. Besides presiding, he preached every evening, and on the conference Sunday twice. The last day was kept as a solemn fast,—prayer-meetings being held at five, nine, and one, and the day concluded with a watchnight. No wonder, that the old Methodist preachers returned from conferences, to their respective circuits, like flames of fire. Wesley writes:

"One of the most important points considered at this conference was that of leaving the Church: The sum of a long conversation was: (1) that, in a course of fifty years, we had neither premeditatedly nor willingly varied from it in one article either of doctrine or discipline; (2) that we were not yet conscious of varying from it in any point of doctrine; (3) that we have, in a course of years, out of necessity, not of choice, slowly and warily varied in some points of discipline, by preaching in the fields, by extemporary prayer, by employing lay preachers, by forming and regulating societies, and by holding yearly conferences.

[1] Cowper had recently published "The Task," and was now employed in his translation of Homer. In another letter, Wesley says: "I think Mr. Cowper has done as much as is possible to be done with his lamentable story. I can only wish he had a better subject."

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But we did none of these things till we were convinced we could no longer omit them, but at the peril of our souls."

This was correct so far as it went; but Wesley ought to have added, the ordaining of preachers, the licensing of chapels; and, further, that in this selfsame year he had published a 12mo volume of 430 pages, entitled, "The Sunday Service of the Methodists; with other Occasional Services"; in reality, an altered edition of the Prayer-Book of the Church of England, attached to which was a "Collection of Psalms and Hymns for the Lord's Day," composed by himself and his brother. Wesley, in his preface, says:

"Little alteration is made in the following edition of it, [The Prayer-Book,] except in the following instances:

"1. Most of the holy days (so called) are omitted, as, at present, answering no valuable end.

"2. The service of the Lord's day, the length of which has often been complained of, is considerably shortened.

"3. Some sentences, in the offices of baptism, and for the burial of the dead, are omitted. And,

"4. Many psalms left out, and many parts of the others, as being highly improper for the mouths of a Christian congregation."

Throughout his book, Wesley uses the word "minister," instead of the objectionable word "priest." The half popish canticle in the morning prayer, "Benedicite, omnia opera," is left out. In the communion service, the word "elder" is used instead of "priest"; and, in the public baptism of infants, Wesley dispenses with signing the child with the sign of the cross, and leaves out the sentence, in the thanksgiving, that "it hath pleased God to regenerate this infant with His Holy Spirit." The "order of confirmation" is omitted, and no reference is made to godfathers and godmothers. The "order for the visitation of the sick" is totally expunged, and of course the popish absolution, "by His (Christ's) authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." In lieu of the three forms for ordaining deacons, priests, and bishops, Wesley gives three for "ordaining *superintendents*, *elders*, and *deacons*." Wesley takes equal liberty with the articles of religion. Some are entirely omitted; others are abridged, or variously altered.

We find no fault with all this. Upon the whole, we regard Wesley's expurgations as emendations.[1] His prayer-book is purged from popish and Calvinian errors; and, in that respect, is superior to the prayer-book of the Church of England. This, however, is not the point in question; but rather, whether, after Wesley had done all this, he could be fairly and honestly considered a member and minister of the Established Church. The Rev. G. Nott, in his Bampton lecture, delivered eleven years after Wesley's death, elaborately argued this matter, and returned a negative reply; and, we confess, it seems impossible to refute his general conclusion, namely, that both "Wesley and Whitefield are to be regarded as separatists from the Church of England."[2] To the day of his death, Wesley protested against this; but his warmest friends must admit that, though both were undeniably sincere, yet, in this respect, profession and practice were at variance. 1788 Age 85

Three years before this, he had ordained Joseph Taylor, who, ever since, had preached in gown and bands, and administered the sacraments in Scotland. Joseph was now appointed to Nottingham circuit; and, of course, as an ordained minister, dreamed that he was the same in England as he had been in Scotland. But not so. Wesley, who, three years before, had *frocked* his itinerant for the people across the Tweed, now *unfrocked* him for the people bordering on the Trent. Hence the following.

"LONDON, *November* 16, 1788.

"DEAR JOSEPH,—I take knowledge of your spirit, and believe it is your desire to do all things right. Our friends in Newark should not have forgotten, that we have determined over and over 'not to leave the Church.' Before they had given you that foolish advice, they should have consulted me. I desire you would not wear the surplice, nor administer the Lord's supper, any more.

"I am, dear Joseph, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[3]

Such was the frequent clashing between practice and pro-

[1] Except in the case of the psalms, where about thirty are discarded, and about sixty mutilated. The propriety of this may be fairly doubted.

[2] See Nott's Bampton Lecture, 1802.

[3] *The Wesleyan*, Nov. 4, 1846.

1788 Age 85 fession. The prayer-book, above mentioned, had been put into the hands of the Methodists; and yet, because of its alterations and abridgments, it was of no use in services conducted in the Church of England. For what then was it intended? The following extract, from the minutes of conference in 1788, supplies an answer.

"*Q.* 21. What further directions may be given concerning the prayers of the Church of England?

"*A.* The assistants shall have a discretionary power to read the Prayer-Book in the preaching houses on Sunday mornings, where they think it expedient, if the generality of the society acquiesce with it; on condition that Divine service never be performed in the church hours on the Sundays when the sacrament is administered in the parish church where the preaching house is situated; and that the people be strenuously exhorted to attend the sacrament in the parish church on those Sundays."

This may be vaguely worded; but there can be no mistake about its meaning. By Wesley's authority, and that of his conference, assistants everywhere were permitted to do what Dr. Coke had authorised to be done in Dublin, namely, that, on certain conditions, there should be Divine service in Methodist chapels in the same hours as Divine service was performed in the parish churches adjoining them. If this was not separation, what was it?

There were two other points discussed at the conference of 1788, of great importance. Many of the preachers were shamefully left without adequate support, and were actually obliged, either to starve from hunger, or to go from house to house to obtain their meals. Wesley was annoyed, perhaps indignant; and, to remedy this glaring evil, the assistants were directed to enforce, that every member, who could afford it, should contribute, in the classmeetings, a penny per week, and a shilling per quarter, at the quarterly visitation, for the maintenance of the preachers appointed to watch over them. And, in addition, Wesley issued the following address.

"*To our Societies in England and Ireland.*

"FIFTY years ago, and for several years following, all our preachers were single men, when, in process of time, a few of them married. Those with whom they laboured maintained both them and their wives, there being then no settled allowance either for the one or the other. But above

thirty years ago, it was found most convenient to fix a stated allowance for both,[1] and this was found by the circuits where they were stationed; till one year some of the circuits complained of poverty. Dr. Coke and I supplied what was wanting. The next year, the number of wives increasing, three or four of them were supplied out of the contingent fund. This was a bad precedent, for more and more wives were thrown upon this fund, till it was likely to be swallowed up thereby.[2] We could think of no way to prevent this, but to consider the state of our societies in England and Ireland, and to beg the members of each circuit to give us that assistance which they can easily do without hurting their families. 1788 Age 85

"Within these fifty years, the substance of the Methodists is increased in proportion to their numbers. Therefore, if you are not straitened in your own bowels, this will be no grievance, but you will cheerfully give food and raiment to those who give up all their time, and strength, and labour to your service.

"LONDON, *August* 2, 1788. "JOHN WESLEY."

No wonder that, in his later years, Wesley so often wrote and spoke of the corrupting influence of the riches of rich Methodists!

The other affair, which demanded the attention of Wesley's conference, in 1788, was equally unpleasant. Six years before, as we have already seen, the trustees, at Birstal, claimed the power of appointing preachers to their chapel. This was followed by the deed of declaration in 1784. At the very time this deed was being signed, the same subject was revived at Dewsbury, a town contiguous to Birstal.

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[1] As a curious specimen of the way in which things were managed in the early days of Methodism, the following extracts are given from "The Dales" circuit book, whose accounts extend from 1765 to 1791.

		s.	*d.*
"1765. Dec. 7.	Thomas Rankin. Two meals, and horse one night	1	0
1766. March 29.	John Ellis. Six meals, and horse three nights, shirt washed, and pennyworth of paper	2	10
„ Sept. 28.	Jeremiah Robertshaw. Twelve meals, and horse four nights, and shirt washing	5	3"

The reader can calculate how many meals a day were allowed to these godly men, and how much per meal. Besides these allowances for *board*, each preacher was entitled to receive, as *quarterage*, for himself £3; and, for his wife, if he had one, £2 10*s*.

[2] The contingent fund, raised by the yearly collection in the classes, was originally intended to defray law expenses, and to pay, or reduce, chapel debts. In this year, 1788, the income of the fund was £1203 7*s*. 1*d*., out of which was paid for law expenses, £37 4*s*. 2*d*.; for chapels, £106 15*s*. 0*d*.; and for the deficiencies of the preachers and their families, £433 18*s*. 1*d*. It was high time for Wesley to take action; though his effort to correct the evil was without effect.

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Here it had been proposed to build a new chapel. Mr. Valton, the assistant, refused to move in the matter, unless it was agreed that the chapel should be settled according to the conference plan. Mr. Heald and some others wished to obtain from Wesley certain concessions, and wrote to John Atlay, the book steward, to secure them. Atlay replied as follows.

"LONDON, *February* 23, 1784.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have, this morning, been with Mr. Wesley, and have laid your letter before him.[1] He is not only willing, but *desires*, it be inserted in your deed, that, if ever the conference, or the preacher appointed by conference, refuse or neglect to provide a preacher for your chapel for three or four Sundays, then the trustees shall have it in their own power to call one whom they please, and the power of nomination shall be theirs in future.

"If any preacher, appointed to serve your chapel, should be proved guilty of immorality, the trustees shall have a power to reject him; and, if the conference does not send another to fill up his place, you shall have a power to call one to do it. "JOHN ATLAY."

On the receipt of this letter, Valton solicited subscriptions, and preached at the laying of the foundation stone.[2]

Five days after the date of the above letter, the deed of declaration was executed; and, among other names omitted, in the constitution of the legal conference, were those of John Atlay and William Eels, the first of whom had been a preacher one-and-twenty years, and the second twelve. This, by no means, increased Atlay's loyalty. In an unpublished letter, dated September 17, 1785, he writes: "Mr. Hampson is well provided for. I have begun to do a little business for myself as coal merchant; and have reason to think it will do well for me. I have not left the book room, nor do I intend

[1] In a 12mo pamphlet, published in 1788, and entitled, "A Reply to what the Rev. Dr. Coke is pleased to call 'The State of the Dewsbury House,' being a Vindication of the Conduct of the Trustees of that House,"—it is stated, that the questions proposed to Wesley by Mr. Heald were: (1) "If the conference should neglect to supply the house with preachers, would it be understood to remain the property of the conference, or would the trustees have a power to provide for themselves? (2) If any preacher, sent them, should be found guilty of immorality, would the trustees have a power of rejecting him?" It further states, that the trustees had, in Wesley's own handwriting, a paragraph to the effect that "the *assistants and leaders* were to be the proper judges" of a preacher charged with immorality. This certainly clashes with Wesley's letter, given hereafter, and dated July 30, 1788.

[2] "The State of Dewsbury House." By Dr. Coke.

it *at present.* I have my trials; but the disagreeable things I have met with, in our connexion, have really raised my heart to God." 1788 Age 85

In another, bearing date, April 18, 1786, he says: "You smile at my commencing coal merchant. There was a time when I could have trusted to my good old friend" (Wesley) "for everything that I wanted, or was likely to want; but late occurrences have given me a check; and, I really think, the thing is right in the sight of the Lord." He then proceeds to state that he had lately been attending the ministry of Mr. Latrobe, the Moravian minister, and that he increasingly admired him every time he heard him.

These extracts may help to throw some light on Atlay's subsequent conduct.

Meanwhile, Dewsbury chapel was completed, and a draft of the trust deed was sent, by Parson Greenwood, to Manchester conference, in 1787, for perusal. This was handed officially to Alexander Mather, who strongly objected to its provisions; and complained that the trustees had not inserted a clause, to the effect, "that no preacher should be sent away till he was tried, and found guilty, before his peers, or the neighbouring assistant preachers." The trustees refused to yield, thus, in reality, making themselves, as Dr. Coke put it, "accusers, jury, judges, and executioners."[1] Wesley had

[1] By the kindness of Mr. Robinson, of Dewsbury, we have before us a copy of the original trust deed, from which we learn that, if, after a vacancy, Wesley or the conference refused or neglected, for the space of forty days, to appoint a preacher; or if the preacher appointed should "not conduct or conform himself to the satisfaction of the trustees or, the major part of them, it should be lawful for the said trustees, or such major part, not only to displace such preacher, (after giving him one month's previous notice thereof in writing,) but also to appoint such other preacher as they should deem more proper, and better qualified to benefit the society." The deed is dated January 31, 1788, and the names and occupations of the trustees are as follows.

John Heald, maltster.
John Robinson, weaver.
Joseph Gill, clothier.
John Beaumont, cordwainer.
John Lancaster, currier.
John Howgate, sen., clothier.
John Howgate, jun., clothier.
Bartholmew Archer, clothier.
William Walker, clothier.
John Thorns, clothier.
Isaac Wilman, clothier.
Abraham Thomas, clothier.
Timothy Parker, clothier.
John Hirst, clothier.
Joseph Bennett, farmer.
Thomas Bromley, clothier.
Benjamin Whitaker, farmer.

1788 Age 85 appointed Parson Greenwood and William Percival to the Dewsbury circuit; but, on October 23, he instructed them to abandon the chapel and to leave the trustees to provide for themselves to their hearts' content.

Mr. Mather, at the time, was in the Sheffield circuit, and obtained Wesley's consent to become mediator between the contending parties. Accordingly he went, and proposed to the trustees that they should have power: (1) To mortgage the premises for the debt unpaid. (2) To let the seats at any price they liked. (3) To appoint their own stewards, and dispose of their own income. He further proposed, that no assistant should expel a trustee from the society but by the consent of the majority of his co-trustees. All this was palatable; but what followed was otherwise. Mather, of course, had no objection to a preacher being dismissed for immorality, as was proposed in Atlay's letter; but he wished to institute a court in which the accused might have a fair and impartial trial; and, hence, requested that a clause might be inserted in the trust deed, providing that three of the nearest assistants should be judges; that, if they found the charges proved, they should join with the trustees in requesting Wesley, or the president of the conference for the time being, to remove the guilty preacher, and to send another in his place; that, if this was not done within a specified time, the trustees should do it themselves; and that, if the conference next ensuing did not send another preacher, then the election of preachers was to remain with the trustees, and the power of conference, to appoint preachers to Dewsbury chapel, to be forfeited for ever. This the trustees stubbornly rejected; and the further consideration of the matter was postponed till February 5, 1788. At this second interview, it was proposed by Mr. Mather, that an appeal should be made to the subscribers to decide whether the clauses he had named should be inserted in the deed; and that their decision should be final. This also was refused; and now, when all further negotiation seemed impossible, Mather, by Wesley's request, informed the seatholders, "that they were not to pay any more rent till the matter was settled between him and the trustees."

Thus the affair was left till the conference of 1788; when a

committee met on the subject. John Atlay was present, and remarked, that if he were to go down to Dewsbury he would soon settle matters with the trustees. Mather objected to Atlay's suggestion, and said: "Mr. Atlay, it is reported, that you have promised the trustees, that, if Mr. Wesley withdraws the preachers from Dewsbury, you will yourself go and serve them. I ask you then, before God and these brethren, have you made *any* such promise, or have you not?" Atlay reluctantly acknowledged, that he had; and, further, that he had also advised the Methodists at Malton not to settle their chapel on the conference plan. Next morning Wesley wrote as follows. 1788 Age 85

"*To the Trustees of Dewsbury.*

"LONDON, *July* 30, 1788.

"MY DEAR BRETHREN,—The question between us is, 'By whom shall the preachers sent, from time to time, to Dewsbury be judged?' You say, 'By the trustees.' I say, 'By their peers—the preachers met in conference.' You say, 'Give up this, and we will receive them.' I say, 'I cannot, I dare not, give up this.' Therefore, if you will not receive them on these terms, you renounce connection with your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

As the trustees still held out, the conference decided that another deputation, consisting of Mather, Pawson, Thompson, Greenwood, and Percival, should meet at Dewsbury on August 14. The deputies asked, "Have you executed a trust deed?" The trustees answered, "Yes." "Can we see it?" "No." "Will you add to it a clause such as Mr. Wesley wishes?" "No." Such, in substance, were the proceedings of the meeting. The result was, as before stated, the preachers, who had been appointed at Dewsbury, were at once removed; the chapel was abandoned; and the preachers in the Birstal circuit once more commenced Methodism at Dewsbury, by preaching in the open streets.[1]

Five days after the date of the Dewsbury meeting, John Atlay, who, as we have seen, had joined to Wesley's book stewardship the business of a coal merchant, and had also been toying with the Dewsbury trustees, wrote as follows to Wesley.

"LONDON, *August* 19, 1788.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I was in hopes matters at Dewsbury

[1] Mather's "State of Dewsbury House."

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would have been made up; but, by a letter yesterday, I am informed that their preachers are removed from them, and their place declared vacant; in consequence of which, the trustees have most solemnly called me to come amongst them. They plead my promise; and I cannot go back from it. With me a promise is sacred; though it should be ever so much to my hurt; and, as to temporals, it must hurt me much. But I regard not that, if there is a prospect that I shall be much more useful there than I ever have been, or can be, in London. But it gives me more pain than I can express, when I tell you that, in order to go there, I must quit the book room. The longest that I can stay in it will be till the 25th of September; and, by that time, you will be able to get one for my place. I think the fittest man in the world for it is Joseph Bradford. If he should be appointed, he may come directly, and stay with us till we go; and, by that time, I could teach him more than he can learn in three months without me; but these things I leave to your superior judgment.

"I have only now to request a few things of you. Do not be angry with me for leaving you, after having spent fifteen of the best years of my life in serving you, with more care, fear, labour, and pain, than all the years of my life have produced. Do not blame me for going to a people you have left; they are the Lord's redeemed ones, and some of them living members of His body. Do not disown me, nor forbid my preaching in any of your places; but give me leave, where and when it is agreeable to the preachers, to preach in your houses. But if this request cannot be complied with, then drop me silently; and let me be of too little consequence to say anything about me from the pulpit or press. I beg you will write by return of post; and do not write unkindly to your faithful servant and friend,

"JOHN ATLAY."[1]

Was this the whine of a mercenary man? or was it the genuine effusion of a loving and honest heart? The reader must answer for himself; remembering, however, that the Dewsbury chapel had been built, not by the money of the trustees, but by the subscriptions of the Methodists; that three years previous to this, Atlay had entertained the thought of ultimately leaving Wesley's stewardship, and, with an eye to that, had begun the business of selling coals; and, further, that, since then, he had unquestionably encouraged the Dewsbury trustees in their rebellion, by promising to become their preacher, when Wesley withdrew his. What was Wesley's answer to his double dealing friend?

[1] "Letters by Rev. J. Wesley and Mr. John Atlay." 1790.

"PEMBROKE, *August* 23, 1788. 1788
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"MY DEAR BROTHER,—If you are persuaded, that such a promise (which is the whole and sole cause of the breach at Dewsbury) is binding, you must follow your persuasion. You will have blame enough from other persons; my hand shall not be upon you. If I can do you good, I will; but shall certainly do you no harm. George Whitfield is the person I choose to succeed you. I wish you would teach him as much as you can without delay.

"I am, with kind love to sister Atlay, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Thus did Wesley dispose of his book steward's mischievous promise; his pert nomination of Joseph Bradford as his successor; and his whimpering prayer that Wesley would not punish him for his naughty tricks.

It is hardly necessary to insert the whole of the correspondence. Suffice it to say, that Wesley requested Atlay, before he left, to employ "one or two proper persons to take an inventory of all the books in the shop and under the chapel," so that George Whitfield might know what was put into his care. Atlay's reply to this was the following.

"LONDON, *September* 20, 1788.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—We have almost this moment finished our job of taking the stock; and, as near as we can tell, your stock is this day worth £13,751 18*s.* 5*d.*, according to the prices fixed in the catalogue. However, you may be sure it is not less than that. Most of these are saleable things. You will be sure to find sale for them, if you live; and, if not, they will be of equal value to those to whom you leave them.

"I am, etc., "JOHN ATLAY."

Atlay went to Dewsbury on September 24, and took possession of the chapel built with the money of Methodists. We have before us a number of Mr. Pawson's letters, written at this period, and in reference to the Dewsbury unpleasantness. Pawson went, and preached to the discontented Methodists; and spent two days in endeavouring to put them right; but without effect. Mr. Mather was "highly offended" on account of this; and Mr. Atlay wrote to Pawson "a thundering letter." Under date of September 16, 1788, Pawson says:

"You see the blessedness of striving to make peace. The assistants of the neighbouring circuits are to preach in the streets at Dewsbury, in their turns. This is pain and grief to me. To preach in opposition, Methodists against Methodists, is painful beyond expression. I believe all might have

1788 Age 85 been prevented by loving, prudent preachers. We have had a few unworthy men among us, who have been a great burden to us and to the people; but we do not lay them aside. Therefore, the people will oblige us to do it, by making deeds like that at Dewsbury. Some of our preachers do not live near to God, and do not endeavour, by reading and prayer, to render themselves acceptable to the people. But now it seems as though the people would make them look about them a little."

From other unpublished letters, we learn that Atlay and Eels[1] had large congregations; that they had taken with them the whole of the Dewsbury society, except a good man and his wife, of the name of Drake; and that one of the trustees soon became a bankrupt, and was said to have squandered a considerable amount of Atlay's money. Difficulties speedily ensued; hence the following, extracted from a letter dated

"BIRSTAL, *December* 18, 1789.

". . . Mr. Atlay and Mr. Eels cannot supply the places they have at present. They want another preacher, but cannot get one. They have tried to get Mr. Holmes, who left us last conference, but he is engaged to Sheerness, as the society there is divided. Besides, I understand, they are all for the Church, and utterly against separation, ordination, etc. The devil can no longer set the men of the world against us; but he is trying a much more effectual way, setting the people and preachers one against another.

"JOHN PAWSON."[2]

Thus did Mr. Atlay really set up an *imperium in imperio.* He called himself a Methodist; and yet was setting Methodism's founder at defiance. Not content with taking possession of the Dewsbury circuit, he went to Shields, and there, and in Newcastle, and other places, founded separate societies. At length, he and his friend Eels quarrelled. Hence the following.

"BIRSTAL, *May* 17, 1791.

". . . Mr. Atlay and Mr. Eels have differed and parted. Mr. Atlay is gone to London, and whether he will return to Dewsbury is quite uncertain. I believe very few desire or expect it. He has treated Mr. Eels in a very unkind and unbrotherly manner ever since he came to Dewsbury,

[1] By some strange oversight, William Eels, at the conference of 1788, was left without an appointment; and, at the time of Atlay's arrival there, was actually at Dewsbury, endeavouring to make peace. Hearing of this, and mistaking Eels' motive, Mr. Mather impetuously took steps to prevent his preaching in other Methodist pulpits. "This was the only cause of his uniting with John Atlay."—(Pawson's manuscripts.)

[2] Unpublished letter.

and Mr. Eels was determined to bear it no longer. The trustees had a meeting, and determined that Mr. Eels should stay, and be, in every respect, equal to Mr. Atlay. They are greatly displeased with Mr. Atlay's conduct, as well as with his doctrines. He has got deep into Mr. Manners'[1] opinions, and says that he has believed them these twenty years. Mr. Eels is very friendly, and I believe most sincerely wishes a reconciliation, and I hope will endeavour to bring it about. 1788 Age 85

"JOHN PAWSON."[2]

William Eels died within two years after this. In the meantime, the Dewsbury trustees began to entertain "shocking opinions" of their friend Atlay; and in September, 1792, sent for Pawson to effect a reunion.[3]

We need not pursue the subject farther. Here we have the rise, the progress, and collapse of the Atlayite rebellion. We could give a number of Atlay's letters, showing that, in 1789, he coquetted with Alexander McNab, and tried to secure the co-operation of James Oddie. But the traitorous book steward has already occupied more space than his worth deserves. We only add, that, to all his other faults, he added that of circulating the most infamous reports reflecting on Wesley's moral character;[4] which extorted from Wesley the following characteristic "Word to whom it may Concern," inserted in his *Magazine* for 1790, just after the appearance of Atlay's pamphlet on the subject.

"IN August, 1788, Mr. Atlay wrote me word, 'I must look out for another servant, for he would go to Dewsbury on September 25.' So far was I from 'bidding him go,' that I knew nothing of it till that hour. But I then told him, 'Go and serve them': seeing I found he would serve me no longer.

"He sent me word that I had in London £13,751 18*s.* 5*d.*, stock in books. Desiring to know exactly, I employed two booksellers to take an account of my stock. The account they brought in, October 31, 1788, was:

'Value of stock, errors excepted, £4827 10*s.* 3½*d.*
'John Parsons,
Thomas Scollick.'

[1] Nicholas Manners was one of Wesley's itinerant preachers from 1759 to 1784. He was an able man. His heresy, in substance, was, that, in consequence of the work and death of Christ, all men are born in the same state as that in which Adam stood previous to his fall.

[2] Unpublished letter. [3] Pawson's manuscript letters.

[4] We have, in manuscript, his most malignant slander, but prefer withholding it. No wonder John Atlay wrote, in a letter to Mr. Merryweather, of Yarm, in 1785, "You know I never mount high in profession of grace."

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"Why did John Atlay so wonderfully overrate my stock? Certainly to do me honour in the eyes of the world.

"I never approved of his going to Dewsbury; but I submitted to what I could not help.

"With respect to Dewsbury House, there never was any dispute about the *property of preaching houses*, that was an artful misrepresentation; but merely the *appointing of preachers* in them.

"If John Atlay has a mind to throw any more dirt upon me, I do not know I shall take any pains to wipe it off. I have but a few days to live; and I wish to spend those in peace.

"LONDON, *Feb.* 25, 1790. "JOHN WESLEY."

These are long, perhaps tedious, statements; but they are not without interest, as helping to illustrate the life and character of Wesley. His career was a long continued scene of trouble. Mobs assailed him first; then parsons and pamphleteers; then his friends, the Calvinists; and, last of all, his vexations were chiefly those occasioned by some of his own faithless followers.

Not to return to Dewsbury, it may be added here, that, at the conference of 1789, the preachers subscribed £206 towards the erection of a new chapel; and Wesley issued two circulars, stating the case to the Methodists in general, and asking their assistance. After mentioning that the former chapel had been built by the contributions of the people, (the trustees themselves not giving a quarter of what it cost,) he continues:

"Observe, here is no dispute about the right of houses at all. I have no right to any preaching house in England. What I claim is, a right of stationing the preachers. This these trustees have robbed me of in the present instance. Therefore, only one of these two ways can be taken; either to sue for this house, or to build another: we prefer the latter, being the most friendly way.

"I beg, therefore, my brethren, for the love of God; for the love of me, your old and well-nigh worn out servant; for the love of ancient Methodism, which, if itinerancy is interrupted, will speedily come to nothing; for the love of justice, mercy, and truth, which are all so grievously violated by the detention of this house; that you will set your shoulders to the necessary work. Be not straitened in your own bowels. We have never had such a cause before. Let not then unkind, unjust, fraudulent men, have cause to rejoice in their bad labour. This is a common cause. Exert yourself to the utmost. I have subscribed £50. So has Dr. Coke. The preachers have done all they could. O let them that have much give plenteously! Perhaps, this is the last labour of love I may have occasion

to recommend to you; let it then stand as one more monument of your real gratitude to, my dear brethren, your old, affectionate brother, 1788 Age 85

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

We now return to the conference of 1788. These were not the only things to try Wesley's patience. An effort was made to set aside the itinerant plan in Scotland,—a plan to which, as already shown, Wesley attached the utmost importance. This evoked the following letter to Lady Maxwell.

"LONDON, *August* 8, 1788.

"MY DEAR LADY,—It is certain, many persons, both in Scotland and England, would be well pleased to have the same preachers always. But we cannot forsake the plan of acting, which we have followed from the beginning. For fifty years, God has been pleased to bless the itinerant plan; the last year most of all; it must not be altered, till I am removed; and, I hope, it will remain till our Lord comes to reign upon earth.

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

To the same effect was another, written three months later, and addressed to Jasper Winscomb.

"LONDON, *November* 8, 1788.

"DEAR JASPER,—William Cashman advised you like a heathen. Mr. Valton *deserves* pay, as well as you do. But he does not want it, and, therefore, scorns to take it, knowing the poverty of the land.

"I am glad to hear so good an account of the Isle of Wight. The work of God will flourish there, if it be steadily pursued.

"No preacher ought to stay either at Portsmouth, or Sarum, or any other place, a whole week together. That is not the Methodist plan at all. It is a novel abuse.

"I am, dear Jasper, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[3]

On the 10th of August, Wesley set out for Wales and the west of England; generally preaching twice a day, and on the Sundays thrice, and everywhere to crowded congregations.

On the 28th of September, he returned to London, and, two days after, went off to Norfolk. The remainder of the year was employed, as usual, in the metropolis and the surrounding counties.

These were not pleasure trips; but made in wintry weather, in frost and snow; the veteran of eighty-five preaching

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1790, p. 103.
[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xii. p. 328.
[3] *Methodist Magazine*, 1859, p. 247.

1788 almost daily, both night and morning, and attending to a
Age 85 thousand things which demanded his attention.[1] He writes.

"December 10, and the following days, I corrected my brother's posthumous poems; being short psalms, and hymns on the four gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles. They make five volumes in quarto, containing eighteen or nineteen hundred pages. Many of them are little, if any, inferior to his former poems, having the same justness and strength of thought, with the same beauty of expression; yea, the same keenness of wit on proper occasions, as bright and piercing as ever. Some are bad; some mean; some most excellently good. They give the true sense of Scripture, always in good English, generally in good verse; many of them are equal to most, if not to any, he ever wrote; but some still savour of that poisonous mysticism, with which we were both not a little tainted before we went to America. This gave a gloomy cast, first to his mind, and then to many of his verses; this made him frequently describe religion as a melancholy thing; this so often sounded in his ears, 'To the desert!' and strongly persuaded in favour of solitude."

What had Wesley to say respecting himself? He writes.

"About this time" [December 15] "I was reflecting on the gentle steps whereby age steals upon us. Take only one instance. Four years ago, my sight was as good as it was at five-and-twenty. I then began to observe, that I did not see things quite so clear with my left eye as with my right; all objects appeared a little browner to that eye. I began next to find a little difficulty in reading a small print by candlelight. A year after, I found it in reading such a print by daylight. In the winter of 1788, I could not well read our four shilling hymn-book, unless with a large candle; the next year, I could not read letters, if wrote with a small or bad hand. Last winter, a pearl appeared on my left eye, the sight of which grew exceeding dim. The right eye seems unaltered; only I am a great deal nearer sighted than ever I was. Thus are 'those that look out at the windows darkened'; one of the marks of old age. But, I bless

[1] Among other places, he preached at Sevenoaks, and is said to have used these words: "When a sinner is awakened, the baptists begin to trouble him about outward forms, and modes of worship, and that of baptism. They had better cut his throat," etc. Whether the exact words were used we have no means of knowing; but a warm controversy sprung out of the affair. Mr. William Kingsford issued "A Vindication of the Baptists from the Criminality of a Charge exhibited against them by the Rev. Mr. Wesley." This was answered by T. C., supposed by Kingsford to be the Rev. Mr. Coleman. (Query Thomas Coke?) And this was replied to by Kingsford in a shilling pamphlet, bearing the title, "Three Letters to the Rev. Mr. Wesley, containing remarks on a Piece lately published, with his approbation, and Three Challenges to all the Methodists in the Kingdom." The whole thing was "much ado about nothing."

God, 'the grasshopper is' not 'a burden.' I am still capable of travelling, and my memory is much the same as it ever was; and so, I think, is my understanding." 1788 Age 85

Thus did Wesley take stock of himself.

On Christmas day, he preached at four o'clock in the morning, in City Road, again at eleven, and in West Street in the evening. On the last Sunday in the year, he had an exceedingly large congregation in Allhallows church, Lombard Street; and, concerning this, there is an anecdote worth relating. The sermon was for the benefit of forty-eight poor children belonging to St. Ethelburga society. "Sir," said Wesley to his attendant while putting on his gown, "it is above fifty years since I first preached in this church; I remember it from a particular circumstance. I came without a sermon; and, going up the pulpit stairs, I hesitated, and returned into the vestry, under much mental confusion and agitation. A woman, who stood by, noticed my concern, and said, 'Pray, sir, what is the matter?' I replied, 'I have not brought a sermon with me.' Putting her hand on my shoulder, she said, 'Is that all? Cannot you trust God for a sermon?' This question had such an effect upon me, that I ascended the pulpit, preached extempore, with great freedom to myself, and acceptance to the people; and have never since taken a written sermon into the pulpit."[1] "A word spoken in due season, how good is it!"

Wesley's publications, in 1788, have all been noticed, except his *Magazine;* and, concerning this, it is not needful to say much. There are, as usual, six new sermons from the venerable editor's own pen: namely, On Reproving Sin; The Signs of the Times; Man; The Ministry of Wicked Ministers; Conscience; and Faith.

Wesley concludes the first of these thus:

"I have now only a few words to add unto you, my brethren, who are vulgarly called Methodists. I never heard or read of any considerable revival of religion, which was not attended with a spirit of reproving. I believe, it cannot be otherwise; for what is faith unless it worketh by love? Thus it was in every part of England, when the present revival of religion began about fifty years ago. All the subjects of that revival,—all the Methodists, in every place, were reprovers of outward sin. And,

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1825, p. 105.

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indeed, so are all that, being justified by faith, have peace with God through Jesus Christ. Such they are at first; and if they use that precious gift, it will never be taken away. Come, brethren! In the name of God, let us begin again! Rich or poor, let us all arise as one man! And, in any wise, let every man rebuke his neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him!"

Wesley's sermon, on attending the ministry of unconverted ministers, would never have been written, had he not been pressed by the objections of Methodists, and yet determined to prevent their leaving the Established Church. Its arguments are specious, not sound. It might puzzle the simple minded Methodists; but it would not convince them they were wrong. It was a feeble attempt to get converted people to sit under an unconverted ministry. We conclude with one extract.

"It has been loudly affirmed, that most of those persons now in connection with *me*, who believe it their duty to call sinners to repentance, having been taken immediately from low trades, tailors, shoemakers, and the like, are a set of poor, stupid, illiterate men, that scarce know their right hand from their left; yet, I cannot but say, that I would sooner cut off my right hand, than suffer one of them to speak a word in any of our chapels, if I had not reasonable proof, that he had more knowledge in the holy Scriptures, more knowledge of himself, more knowledge of God and of the things of God, than nine in ten of the clergymen I have conversed with, either at the universities, or elsewhere. Undoubtedly, there are many clergymen in these kingdoms, that are not only free from outward sin, but men of eminent learning, and, what is infinitely more, deeply acquainted with God. But, still, I am constrained to confess, that the far greater part of those ministers I have conversed with, for above half a century, have not been holy men,—not devoted to God,—not deeply acquainted either with God or themselves."

Such was Wesley's reluctant confession; and yet, to prevent what he called a separation from the Established Church, he elaborately persuades the Methodists, that they ought to receive the sacraments from these men; instead of requiring them at the hands of the converted artisans, who had preached so successfully, and who, according to Wesley's own confession, were, even in point of *scriptural knowledge*, the superiors of the unconverted gentlemen, trained in colleges, and made priests or deacons—not by Christ,—but by bishops!

1789.

WESLEY wrote: 1789 Age 86

"January 1, 1789—If this is to be the last year of my life, according to some of those prophecies, I hope it will be the best. I am not careful about it, but heartily receive the advice of the angel in Milton,—

'How well is thine; how long, permit to Heaven.'

"January 5—I once more sat for my picture. Mr. Romney is a painter indeed. He struck off an exact likeness at once; and did more in an hour than Sir Joshua did in ten.[1]

"January 9—I left no money to any one in my will, because I had none. But now, considering that, whenever I am removed, money will soon arise by sale of books, I added a few legacies by a codicil, to be paid as soon as may be. But I would fain do a little good while I live; for who can tell what will come after him?"

"January 11—I again warned the congregation, as strongly as I could, against conformity to the world. But who will take the warning? If hardly one in ten, yet is my record with the Most High."

"January 20—I retired in order to finish my year's accounts. If possible, I must be a better economist; for, instead of having anything beforehand, I am now considerably in debt; but this I do not like. I would fain settle even my accounts before I die."

It was at this period that the following unpublished letter was written. Duncan McAllum had been ordained by Wesley in 1787, and the reader will observe that, instead of addressing him as he addressed his preachers in general, he gives him the title of "reverend."

"LONDON, *January* 20, 1789.

"DEAR DUNCAN,—By all means choose trustees without delay; and let them be such as belong to the circuit; only such as you can depend upon, both for judgment and honesty. I think it is by prayer that you must alter the purpose of the Earl of Findlater. I am not at all surprised at the behaviour of John Atlay. In a year or two, he will find whether he has changed for the better. He was the first occasion of the division at Dewsbury, by sending word to the trustees, that,

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[1] The photographic portrait, in the present volume, is taken from Romney's painting, by the kind permission of its possessor, the Rev. G. Stringer Rowe.

1789 Age 86

if the conference would not supply them with preachers, he would come himself, and settle among them.

"I am, with love to sister McAllum, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY.

"To the Rev. Mr. McAllum, Inverness."

Four days later, he wrote as follows to Freeborn Garretson, in America.

"LONDON, *January* 24, 1789.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—It signifies but little where we are, so we are but fully employed for our good Master. Whether you went, therefore, to the east, it is all one, so you were labouring to promote His work. You are following the order of His providence, wherever it appeared, as a holy man expressed it, in a kind of holy disordered order. But there is one expression, that occurs twice or thrice in yours, which gives me some concern: you speak of finding freedom to do this or that. This is a word much liable to be abused. If I have plain Scripture, or plain reason, for doing a thing,—well. These are my rules, and my only rules. I regard not whether I had freedom or no. This is an unscriptural expression, and a very fallacious rule. I wish to be in every point, great and small, a scriptural, rational Christian.

"I am, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

At the end of January, Wesley went to open new chapels at Rye and Winchelsea. Returning to London, the month of February was spent in preaching, in writing, in meeting classes and the local preachers, and in ordaining Henry Moore and Thomas Rankin, the last of his preachers upon whom he laid his hands.[2]

The following anecdotes, related in the Life of Moore, belong to the present year, and are strikingly characteristic of Wesley and his friends.

One of the leading men, in the London circuit, (though not a member,) had been in the habit of receiving the sacrament from the hands of Wesley and his brother clergymen, but had fallen into sin. Henry Moore waited upon him for an explanation of his conduct, and, not being satisfied, told him he should be obliged to refuse him a note of admission to the Lord's supper. The gentleman was annoyed, and went to one of Wesley's clergy, whom he persuaded to apply to Wesley on his behalf. Entering the vestry while Wesley was writing the note, Moore with

[1] Life of Garretson. [2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1867, p. 623.

his honest sternness accosted him: "Sir, do you mean to give a note of admission to Mr.——?" "Yes, Henry," replied Wesley, "I have reason to believe the report of his conduct is a mistake." "I have fully examined it," answered Moore, "and I find it no mistake; and, if you give him a note, I shall not take the sacrament myself." Wesley, in reply, observed, "I would take the sacrament if the devil himself were there." "So would I," said Moore, "but not if you gave him a note of admission." The Irishman came off with flying colours; for Wesley put the note into the fire, and left the erring one to think and to repent. 1789 Age 86

Mrs. Hall was Wesley's only surviving sister, and was an inmate of his house, but not a Methodist. One day, the two called on Henry Moore. "Brother," said Mrs. Hall, "I should like to attend the religious meetings of your people. Have I your leave?" "O yes," said he, "you may go to them." "Then," rejoined this friend of the great Dr. Johnson, "having your permission, I shall not ask that of any one else." "Yes, you must;" replied her brother, remembering that Moore was circuit assistant, "when I am not here, you must ask leave of Henry Moore."

In these days, it was customary for the itinerant and local preachers to take breakfast together, on Sunday mornings, at City Road. On one occasion, when Wesley was present, a young man rose and found fault with one of his seniors. The Scotch blood of Thomas Rankin was roused, and he sharply rebuked the juvenile for his impertinence; but, in turn, was as sharply rebuked himself. Wesley instantly replied: "I will thank the youngest man among you to tell me of any fault you see in me; in doing so, I shall consider him as my best friend." This was quite enough to silence Rankin.

"Henry Moore," said Wesley, "you are a witness that what John Atlay said, when he left us, is untrue. He said, 'Mr. Wesley could never bear a man who contradicted him.' Now no man in England has contradicted me as much as you have done; and yet, Henry, I love you still. You are right."

Hundreds of such anecdotes might be given: these must serve as specimens.

On Sunday, the 1st of March, after preaching to two crowded congregations, in City Road, Wesley and three of

1789 Age 86 his preachers took coach for Bath; and "spent," says he, "a comfortable night, partly in sound sleep, and partly in singing praise to God." Such, after a hard day, at seven o'clock in a winter's night, was the start of an old man of eighty-six, on a five months' preaching tour!

At Bath and Bristol, he spent a fortnight, in preaching and meeting classes, and then set out for Ireland. On the way, he preached at Stroud, Gloucester, and Tewkesbury. At Birmingham, he opened a new chapel, and remarks: "Saturday, March 21—I had a day of rest, only preaching morning and evening." The passage from Holyhead, instead of occupying four hours, as at present, occupied thirty-six, and, during it, the venerable voyager was a serious sufferer. "I do not remember," he writes, "that I was ever so sick at sea before; but this was little to the cramp which held most of the night with little intermission." He arrived at Dublin quay at eight on Sunday morning, and, notwithstanding the illness from which he had suffered, went direct to Dublin chapel, and "preached on the sickness and recovery of King Hezekiah and King George," and afterwards administered the sacrament to about five hundred people.

At this sacramental service, he employed his assistant, William Myles, in giving the cup to the communicants; an act which occasioned huge offence, for William Myles was not ordained. In the week following, a long paragraph appeared in the *Dublin Evening Post*, setting forth, that "the *Church was in danger!* and calling upon the archbishop to use his authority; for a Mr. William Myles, a layman, had assisted Mr. Wesley in administering the Lord's supper; the greatest innovation that had been witnessed for the last fifty years!" "This brought on," says Mr. Myles, "a newspaper controversy, which continued for three months. My name was bandied about to some purpose; but I endeavoured in patience to possess my soul. At the expiration of the three months, the subscribers desired the printer to put no more Methodist nonsense into his paper; and he had the good sense to listen to the requisition of his customers, which happily terminated this exquisitely silly controversy."[1]

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1797, p. 313.

On Wesley's arrival at Dublin, he had, to use his own expression, "letter upon letter," concerning the alteration in the Sunday service, which had been introduced by Dr. Coke; and, hence, he addressed the following. 1789 Age 86

"To certain Persons in Dublin.

"WHITEFRIAR STREET, DUBLIN, *March* 31, 1789.

"MY DEAR BRETHREN,—I much approve of the manner and spirit wherein you write concerning these tender points. I explained myself upon them, in some measure, on Sunday: I will do it more fully now.

"At present, I have nothing to do with Dr. Coke: but I answer for myself. I do not separate from the Church, nor have any intention so to do. Neither do they, that meet on Sunday noon, separate from the Church, any more than they did before: nay, less; for they attend the church and sacrament oftener now than they did two years ago.

"'But this occasions much strife.' True; but they make the strife who do not attend the service. Let them quietly either come or stay away, and there will be no strife at all.

"'But those that attend say, those that do not are fallen from grace.' No, they do not give them a bad word; but they surely will fall from grace, if they do not let them alone who follow their own consciences.

"But you 'fear this will make way for a total separation from the Church.' You have no ground for this fear. There can be no such separation while I live. Leave to God what may come after.

"But, to speak plainly, do not you separate from the Church? Yea, much more than those you blame? Pray, how often have you been at church since Christmas? Twelve times in twelve weeks? And how long have you been so fond of the Church? Are you fond of it at all? Do not you go oftener to a Dissenting meeting than either to St. Patrick's, or your parish church?

"My dear brethren, you and I have but a short time to stay together. 'My race of glory is run, and race of shame; and I shall shortly be with those that rest.' Therefore, as one that loves you well, and has loved you long, I advise you, in the presence and in the fear of God: (1) Either quietly attend the Sunday service, or quietly refrain from it; then there will be no strife at all. Now you make the strife of which you complain. (2) Make not this a pretence for being weary of well doing. Do not, for so poor a reason, withdraw your subscription from the school or the preachers. What a miserable revenge would this be! Never let it be said, that my friend A—— K——, that brother D——, or B——, were capable of this. From this hour, let this idle strife be buried in eternal oblivion. Talk not of it any more. If it be possible, think not of it any more. Rather think, 'the Judge standeth at the door;' let us prepare to meet our God!

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 253.

1789 Age 86 Such was Wesley's attempt to defend the Dublin Methodist service in church hours; or rather, such was his attack on those who were opposed to it. No doubt his accusations were founded upon facts; but this was hardly an answer to the argument of objectors, that having service in church hours was, *ipso facto*, separation from the Church. He tells us, that one consequence of Dr. Coke's new arrangement was, that three times more Methodists now went to St. Patrick's, on the first Sunday in every month, than had done for ten or twenty years before; and that, on the first Sunday of April, when he went himself, many of them went with him; the number of communicants being about five hundred, or, in other words, more communicants, on that single Sunday, than St. Patrick's used to have the whole year round, before the Methodists were known in Ireland. The arrangement, says Wesley, that the Methodists in Dublin should have service in church hours, "on condition that they would attend St. Patrick's every first Sunday in the month, was made, not to prepare for, but to prevent, a separation from the Church." There can be no question, that this was Wesley's wish; but it may be doubted whether it was Dr. Coke's intention.

During this Dublin fracas, Wesley sent, at least, one letter to the public papers. The following is an extract.

"*To the Printer of the 'Dublin Chronicle.'*

"LONDONDERRY, *June* 2, 1789.

"SIR,—As soon as I was gone from Dublin, the *Observer* came forth, only with his face covered. Afterwards, he came out, under another name, and made a silly defence for me, that he might have the honour of answering it. His words are smoother than oil, and flow (who can doubt it?) from mere love both to me and the people.

"But what does this smooth, candid writer endeavour to prove, with all the softness and good humour imaginable? Only this point, (to explain it in plain English,) that I am a double tongued knave, an old crafty hypocrite, who have used religion merely for a cloak, and have worn a mask for these fifty years, saying one thing and meaning another. A bold charge this, only it happens that matter of fact contradicts it from beginning to end."

Wesley then proceeds to give an outline of his history from his youth to the time when he took the French churches in West Street, Seven Dials, and in Spitalfields, and he and his brother began to preach in them in church hours; and states

that the two archbishops of Canterbury, Potter and Secker, and the two bishops of London, Gibson and Lowth, never blamed them for this, or thought or called it separation from the Church; only, on one occasion, Archbishop Potter said: "These gentlemen are irregular; but they have done good, and I pray God to bless them." Wesley continues: 1789 Age 86

"It may be observed that, all this time, if my brother or I were ill, I desired one of our other preachers, though not ordained, to preach in either of the chapels, after reading part of the Church prayers. This both my brother and I judged would endear the Church prayers to them, whereas, if they were used wholly to extemporary prayer, they would naturally contract a kind of contempt, if not aversion, to forms of prayer; so careful were we, from the beginning, to prevent their leaving the Church.

"When the Rev. Mr. Edward Smyth came to live in Dublin, he earnestly advised me to leave the Church; meaning thereby, (as all sensible men do,) to renounce all connection with it, to attend the services of it no more, and to advise all our societies to take the same steps. I judged this to be a matter of great importance, and would, therefore, do nothing hastily; but referred it to the body of preachers, then met in conference. We had several meetings, in which he proposed all his reasons for it at large. They were severally considered, and answered, and we all determined not to leave the Church.

"A year ago, Dr. Coke began officiating at our chapel in Dublin. This was no more than had been done in London for between forty and fifty years. Some persons immediately began to cry out, 'This is leaving the Church, which Mr. Wesley has continually declared he would never do.' And I declare so still. But I appeal to all the world, I appeal to common sense, I appeal to the *Observer* himself, could I mean hereby, 'I will not have service in church hours'? No; but I denied, and do deny still, that this is leaving the Church, either in the sense of Bishop Gibson, or of Mr. Smyth at the Dublin conference. Yet, by this outcry, many well meaning people were frighted well-nigh out of their senses.

"'But see the consequence of having Sunday service here! See the confusion this occasioned!' Some time since, while a popular preacher was preaching at Leeds, one cried out, 'Fire! Fire!' The people took fright, some leaped over the gallery, and several legs and arms were broken. But upon whom were these consequences to be charged? Not on the preacher, but on him that made the outcry. Apply this to the present case. I have kindled no more fire in Dublin than I did in London. It is the *Observer* and a few other mischief makers, who fright the people out of their senses; and they must answer to God for the consequence.

"This is my answer to them that trouble me, and will not let my grey hairs go down to the grave in peace. I am not a man of duplicity; I am not an old hypocrite, a double tongued knave. More than forty years, I

1789 Age 86 have frequented Ireland. I have wished to do some good here. I now tell a plain tale, that 'the good that is in me may not be evil spoken of.' I have no temporal end to serve. I seek not the honour that cometh of men. It is not for pleasure, that, at this time of life, I travel three or four thousand miles a year. It is not for gain.

'No foot of land do I possess,
No cottage in this wilderness;
A poor wayfaring man,
I lodge awhile in tents below,
Or gladly wander to and fro,
Till I my Canaan gain.'

"JOHN WESLEY.

"P.S. At the desire of a friend, I add a few words in answer to one or two other objections.

"First. When I said, 'I believe I am a scriptural bishop,' I spoke on Lord King's supposition, that bishops and presbyters are essentially one order.

"Secondly. I did desire Mr. Myles to assist me in delivering the cup. Now, be this right or wrong, how does it prove the point now in question, that I leave the Church? I ask (2) What law of the Church forbids this? And (3) What law of the primitive church? Did not the priest in the primitive church send both the bread and wine to the sick by whom he pleased, though not ordained at all?

"Thirdly. The *Observer* affirms, 'To say you will not leave the church, meaning thereby all true believers in England, is trifling.' Certainly; but I do not mean so when I say, 'I will not leave the Church.' I mean, unless I see more reason for it than I ever yet saw, I will not leave the Church of England as by law established, while the breath of God is in my nostrils."[1]

Such was Wesley's manifesto in 1789; in reality, a defence of a thing he had often condemned,—Methodist service in church hours.

While Wesley was thus attacked in the public press, he met with the greatest respect and attention from several persons of distinguished rank in Dublin and its environs; the Earl of Moira among the number. "They seemed," says Mr. Myles, "to think it a blessing to have him beneath their roof."[2] Many of them flocked to hear him, on Good Friday, when he preached, morning and evening, in the elegant chapel of his old clerical dissenting friend, the Rev. Edward Smyth.

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 254.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1831, p. 298.

Neither grand people, however, nor grand chapels, were at all prized by Wesley, except as they furnished opportunities of Christian usefulness. "At both times on Good Friday," says he, "we had a brilliant congregation, among whom were honourable and right honourable persons; but I felt they were all given into my hands; for God was in the midst. What a mercy it is, what a marvellous condescension in God, to provide such places as Bethesda, and Lady Huntingdon's chapels, for these delicate hearers, who could not bear sound doctrine if it were not set off with these *pretty trifles!*" 1789 Age 86

Dublin was not the only place which, at this time, gave Wesley trouble. The Dewsbury circuit was entirely wrested by his traitorous book steward; and now, the same rebellion against giving Wesley, and (after his death) Wesley's conference, the sole power to appoint preachers, was showing itself at Shields. Hence the following, addressed to the three itinerant preachers stationed in the Newcastle circuit.

"DUBLIN, *April* 11, 1789.

"I *require* you three, Peter Mill, Joseph Thompson, and John Stamp, without consulting or regarding any person whatever, to require a positive answer of Edward Coats, within three weeks after the receipt of this, 'Will you, or will you not, settle the house at Milburn Place, North Shields, on the Methodist plan?' If he will not do it within another week, I farther require that none of you preach in that house, unless you will renounce all connection with your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY.

"I am at a point. I will be trifled with no longer."[1]

Was this more hasty than wise? John Pawson seemed to think so. The following is taken from one of his unpublished letters to Charles Atmore, dated "Leeds, May 9, 1789."

"What a pity it is that Mr. Wesley will pursue these violent measures! If he goes thus, there will be divisions upon divisions among us. Mr. Hanby informs me, that, at North and South Shields, and at Alnwick, they refuse to settle their houses upon the conference plan; and, at Newcastle, they have been talking of building a chapel for the Rev. Mr. Collins, and of inviting some of the best preachers to settle among them, and make a circuit by themselves. I suppose Mr. Sagar would tell you, they had strange commotions among them when he was there."

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 117.

1789 Age 86

But even this was not all. In 1785, Wesley ordained John Pawson and Thomas Hanby for Scotland; where, for two years, they had administered the sacraments, and had preached[1] in gown and bands. In 1787, as already stated, he brought them back to England, commanded them to doft their canonicals, and, being in England, to discontinue their sacramental services. This, to Pawson, was exceedingly annoying; but he hardly had the pluck of Hanby in resisting it. Hanby and Joseph Taylor, (who had also been ordained, and was in the same dubious position,) were now stationed in the Nottingham circuit; and many of the Methodists, aware of their ordination, naturally wished them to administer to them the Christian ordinances; but this Wesley imperiously prohibited. Taylor yielded; Hanby persisted. The following extracts, from two of his unprinted letters, will be read with interest. The first was addressed to James Oddie; the second to Richard Rodda.

"GRANTHAM, *May* 21, 1789.

"MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,—I have been in deep waters on account of my administering the Lord's supper, which I think it my duty to do, especially to those who, for conscience sake, cannot go to church. Mr. Wesley ordered me to desist. I told him, if I did, I should sin, because I was persuaded it was my duty. Then he instructed the London clergy and preachers to take me in hand. I have received their letter, and have replied, that I must still do as I have done; and that, if Mr. Wesley has given me up into their hands, they must act according to their own judgment; for what I was now doing was from a Divine conviction of my duty. Thus the matter rests. For some time, I have expected another preacher to take my place; but, as he has not come, perhaps, they will refer the matter to conference. Mr. Wesley has ordered Joseph Taylor, (who opposes me all he can,) to remove the leaders who have promoted the sacraments; if he does so, I expect there will be a division.

"See, my brother, my situation. I am much afraid of myself, lest I should defile my conscience by yielding to the importunity of the preachers. I am of all others the most improper person to make a stand in defence of Christ's precious and most neglected ordinance. However, hitherto, through infinite mercy, I have been firm and immovable; and our solemnities are much owned of God; and I have much employment in the sacred service. I meet with great opposition from the high church bigots; but yet there are many, who will stand by me, let the consequence be what it will.

"Let me hear from you soon; and advise your very affectionate friend and brother,

"THOMAS HANBY."

"PLUMTREE, *June* 4, 1789. 1789

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—O yes! my sin is not to be forgiven unless I repent, which I cannot do. That is too late, because I cannot seek it with tears. Mr. Wesley has declared, that he will exclude the preachers who administer the Lord's supper in England. For some time, I have expected to be unshipped; but whether hands are scarce, or I am to be permitted to finish my voyage, which will be the last week in July, I cannot tell. Age 86

"I came under no such obligations to Mr. Wesley, not to administer in England. If this prohibition had been laid upon me, I hope I should have refused his offer of *nothing*. I am in the fire, but, like the salamander, I live there. I am up to the chin in deep waters; but not drowned. Mr. Mather sent me a threatening bull; Mr. Wesley a second; and, to complete the work, the clergy in London, Mr. Rankin and Mr. Moore, joined their artillery. The last in command is my colleague, Joseph Taylor, who opposes me with the utmost warmth. You will readily conclude, 'Poor Hanby will be overpowered by numbers.' True; but I still keep the field, for all that, and mean to die there. I am single handed, for my brethren, who promised to support me, have deserted to the strongest party, not an unusual case. I grant, that those who are called to preach have an equal right to administer; but do not talk of 'depreciating ordination.' Mr. Wesley did that, seven years ago, when he published in the newspapers those who had presumed to be ordained by the Greek bishop. I expect, he will depreciate me, though he himself ordained me, and commanded me to administer the ordinances in the church of God.

"When the great opposition against the sacraments was formed, Mr. Taylor had administered once; and I had promised to do so in two other places; and when my engagements were fulfilled, I proposed to desist from proceeding further, (as he had done,) for I saw there was no withstanding so formidable a body. However, I was brought into deep distress of mind, by the earnest request of the people, who had not communicated for years, and who would not communicate with drinking, whoring, swearing, and fighting parsons. The Lord let me see that His ordinance was become obsolete, and that it was an unreasonable stretch of power, in any human creature, to say, 'If you will not communicate with these wicked men, you shall not communicate at all.' This appeared to me as an abrogation of Christ's commanded ordinance, for which no one, either man or angel, had authority. I saw it was my duty to stand forth in defence of this ordinance, and to suffer for it; for suffer I am sure to do. Mr. Wesley, for many years, has treated me contemptuously, putting me beneath the weakest and most suspicious characters, (viz. Briscoe and Fenwick,) and, therefore, I expect no favour in that quarter.

"I begin to look out for some poor cottage, to which I may retire, and wait the opening of Providence. '*Vox populi vox Dei*,' is my motto; and, whatever others may say or think of me, I have no other motive but the principle of Divine love. I can promise my sect neither riches nor

1789 honour, by my opposition to the conference; but quite the reverse. To be
Age 86 expelled the connexion, after thirty-five years of uninterrupted labour, is, to me, a very painful thought; but I see I must suffer it; and shall only take away with me this motto, 'Driven from Methodism for defending the injured, and nearly abrogated and obsolete, ordinance of Christ.' Farewell, Mr. Wesley! Farewell, Mr. Rodda! Farewell, conference!

"I have written Mr. Wesley my reasons for acting in opposition to his will, and my reasons why I must still act as I do; but he has given me no answer. Well, I am nothing. I only want to be the servant of God; and I see I must be His servant in His own way. If we may judge of the propriety of our action, by His sacred presence, I can assure you the tokens of that presence are wonderfully manifested in our assemblies.

"Many of the people in this circuit intend to apply again for the ordinance; and, perhaps, their petition will be treated with the same contempt as their last was at Manchester.

"I am your very affectionate, and much obliged friend and brother,

"THOMAS HANBY."

This was a painful state of things; Dewsbury, Shields, Nottingham, and Dublin, in rebellion; and now Thomas Hanby, ordained by Wesley, and one of his best preachers, in danger of expulsion, for doing what he deemed to be his duty. Fortunately, this unbending minister was saved; and became the elected president of the fourth conference that was held after Wesley's death. On Christmas day, in 1796, he preached thrice in Nottingham, and met four or five classes for the renewal of their quarterly tickets. This was his last labour of love. Four days afterwards, he died, saying: "I am departing; but I have fought a good fight."[1]

Wesley left Dublin, on his preaching tour through the Irish provinces, on the 13th of April, and returned on the 19th of June. In this nine weeks' journey he preached about a hundred sermons, in more than sixty different towns and villages, at least a dozen times in the open air, half-a-dozen times in churches, and once in a place which, he says, was "large, but not elegant—a cow-house."

During a part of the time, he was seriously unwell, being attacked with a complaint which was new to him, diabetes. He wrote to London for the advice of Dr. Whitehead, and, though the disease abated under the doctor's treatment, he suffered from it, more or less, to the time of his decease.[2]

[1] Atmore's "Methodist Memorial."
[2] Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 379.

"I was delighted," says Mr. Alexander Knox, "to find his cheerfulness in no respect abated. It was too obvious that his bodily frame was sinking; but his spirit was as alert as ever; and he was little less the life of the company he happened to be in, than he had been three-and-twenty years before, when I first knew him. Such unclouded sunshine of the breast, in the deepest winter of age, and on the felt verge of eternity, bespoke a mind whose recollections were as unsullied as its present sensations were serene." 1789 Age 86

In illustration of Mr. Knox's testimony, an anecdote may be added. At this time, Mr. (afterwards the Rev.) Joseph Burgess was quartermaster of a regiment of soldiers in Sligo barracks, and had the honour of entertaining Wesley as his guest. A large party of friends were assembled to meet the venerable visitor at dinner; and, while the meal was in progress, he suddenly laid down his knife and fork, clasped his hands, and lifted up his eyes, as in the attitude of praise and prayer. In an instant, feasting was suspended, and all the guests were silent. Wesley then gave out, and sang with great animation,

"And can we forget,
In tasting our meat,
The angelical food which ere long we shall eat;
When enrolled with the blest,
In glory we rest,
And for ever sit down at the heavenly feast?"

The happy old man, so near to the gates of heaven, then quietly resumed his knife and fork; and all felt that this beautiful spontaneous episode, in the midst of an Irish dinner, had done them good.[1]

Wesley spent three weeks more in Dublin and its vicinity. He visited the classes, which contained above a thousand members, after he had excluded about a hundred. He also held his Irish conference, at which, of the sixty preachers then employed in the sister island, between forty and fifty were present. He writes:

"I found such a body of men as I hardly believed could have been found together in Ireland; men of so sound experience, so deep piety,

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1840, p. 543.

1789 Age 86 and so strong understanding. I am convinced, they are no way inferior to the English conference, except it be in number. I never saw such a number of preachers before, so unanimous in all points, particularly as to leaving the Church, which none of them had the least thought of. It is no wonder, that there has been this year so large an increase of the society."

On the conference Sunday, Wesley and his preachers, and a large number of the Dublin Methodists, attended the service in St. Patrick's. "The dean," says he, "preached a serious, useful sermon; and we had such a company of communicants as, I suppose, had scarce been seen there together, for above a hundred years."

On his birthday he wrote:

"June 28.—This day I enter on my eighty-sixth year.[1] I now find, I grow old: (1) My sight is decayed; so that I cannot read a small print, unless in a strong light. (2) My strength is decayed; so that I walk much slower than I did some years since. (3) My memory of names, whether of persons or places, is decayed; till I stop a little to recollect them. What I should be afraid of, is, if I took thought for the morrow, that my body should weigh down my mind; and create either stubbornness, by the decrease of my understanding, or peevishness, by the increase of bodily infirmities: but Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God."

At length, on July 12, Wesley bid adieu to the shores of Ireland, for ever. It was a touching scene. Multitudes followed him to the ship. Before he went on board, he read a hymn; and the crowd, as far as emotion would let them, joined the sainted patriarch in singing. He then dropped upon his knees, and asked God to bless them, their families, the Church, and Ireland. Shaking of hands followed; many wept most profusely; and not a few fell on the old man's neck and kissed him. He stepped on deck; the vessel moved; and then, with his hands still lifted up in prayer, the winds of heaven wafted him from an island which he dearly loved; and the warm hearted Irish Methodists "saw his face no more."[2]

Before proceeding with Wesley's history, another selection from his letters may be welcome. The first was addressed to a man who deserves a passing notice.

[1] It ought to have been eighty-seventh.
[2] "Anecdotes of the Wesleys," p. 312.

Walter Churchey was an enthusiastic Welshman; a lawyer with a large family and a slender purse; a good, earnest, conceited old Methodist, who, unfortunately for his wife and children, had more delight in writing poetry than he had employment in preparing briefs. He was one of Wesley's correspondents as early as 1771;[1] exchanged letters with Wesley's brother Charles; was an acquaintance of the saintly Fletcher; and an intimate friend of Joseph Benson and Dr. Coke. He claimed the honour, which belonged to others, of having first suggested to Wesley the publishing of his *Arminian Magazine*;[2] and, in a manuscript letter before us, states that he it was who originated the scheme for reducing what he calls "the national debt" of Methodism in the year 1800. He was a good man, though perhaps flighty, very diligent but very poor, a warm admirer of Methodist doctrine, but withal a millenarian, who wrote, in the letter just mentioned: "I have lost my friend, Wesley; but I shall see him again, perhaps *soon*, even upon *earth*, where the *sufferers* for Christ are to rise to reign in His spiritual kingdom on earth a thousand years. I grow daily a greater *Brotherite*."[3] 1789 Age 86

In 1786, Churchey wished to enrich the world with his poetical productions; and, among others, consulted Wesley and the poet Cowper. The latter, in reply, remarked: "I find your versification smooth, your language correct and forcible, and especially in your translation of the Art of Printing. But you ask me, would I advise you to publish? I would advise every man to publish, whose subjects are well chosen, whose sentiments are just, and who can afford to be a loser, if that should happen, by his publication."[4]

Thus encouraged, the sanguine Welshman set to work; Wesley helped him in obtaining subscribers; the poems were published; the reviewers were revilers; and poor Churchey was poorer than ever.

The following letters, among others, were addressed to this

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 404.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1823, p. 134.
[3] A reference to Richard Brothers, the prophecy expounder of that period.
[4] Cowper's Works, Bohn's edit., vol. iii., p. 370.

1789 worthy, but needy man. The first and second have not before
Age 86 been published.

"LONDON, *February* 11, 1789.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—On Monday, March 2, I hope to be in Bath or Bristol, and then we may talk about the number of copies. I have been much more concerned than you, for these sixty years, in printing books, both with and without subscription; and I still think, with all our skill and industry, we shall be hard set to procure three hundred subscribers. Perhaps three hundred may *promise;* but we must never imagine that *all* who promise will perform. But of this we may talk more, when we meet at Bristol.

"I suppose every one that loves King George loves Mr. Pitt. Peace be with all your spirits!

"I am your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

"CLONES, *May* 25, 1789.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am afraid of delay. I doubt, I shall not be able to be as good as our word, although, in the last proposals, I have protracted the time of delivery till the 1st of August. As you are not a stripling, I wonder you have not yet learnt the difference between *promise* and *performance.* I allow, at least, five-and-twenty per cent; and, from this conviction, I say to each of my subscribers (what, indeed, *you* cannot say so decently to *yours*), 'Sir, down with your money.'

"I know Dr. Ogilvie well. He is a lovely man and an excellent poet. I commend you for inoculating the children. I believe the hand of God is in our present work: therefore, it must prosper. Indeed, I love sister Churchey, and am your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

The following, besides referring to Churchey's poems, is possessed of interest as containing an allusion to the prayer-book published in 1788; and also Wesley's final testimony concerning the great philanthropist, John Howard, who died seven months afterwards.

"DUBLIN, *June* 20, 1789.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Michael —— is an original. He tells lies innumerable, many of them plausible enough. But many talk full as plausibly as he; and they that can believe him, may.

"I do not doubt, but some part of your verse, as well as prose, will reach the hearts of some of the rich.

"Dr. Coke made two or three little alterations in the prayer-book without my knowledge. I took particular care throughout, to alter nothing merely for altering's sake. In religion, I am for as few innovations as possible; I love the old wine best. And if it were only on this account, I prefer '*which*' before '*who* art in heaven.'

"Mr. Howard is really an extraordinary man. God has raised him up to be a blessing to many nations. I do not doubt, but there has been something more than natural in his preservation hitherto, and should not wonder if the providence of God should hereafter be still more conspicuous in his favour. 1789 Age 86

"About three weeks hence, I expect to embark for England. Peace be with you and yours!

"I am your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY.[1]

While in Ireland, Wesley was troubled with the affairs of Scotland. Two years before this, John Pawson, eager to exercise his newly acquired episcopal or presbyterian power, —whichever the reader has a mind to call it,—began, in Glasgow, a species of Methodism, which was not Wesley's, but his own. He ordained seven elders, who were to meet weekly, and to have the supervision of the temporal and spiritual affairs of the Glasgow Methodists. In a book, Pawson wrote the rules, which were to regulate their conduct. Among others, one regulation was, that no person should be admitted into the society, or be expelled from it, but by a majority of these ordained elders; for, though the itinerant preacher might preside at their meetings, he was not allowed to vote. No doubt, honest but simple Pawson expected good and great results. The elders, however, like Pawson, had no notion of being invested with ecclesiastical office without using it; and, hence, all sorts of paltry cases were got up, apparently for the purpose of enabling the newly fledged elders to show their skill in settling them. One must suffice, as a specimen. Thomas Tassey, the most vigilant and active of the official seven, alleged that Peggy —— had become a lodger with Peggy ——, and had committed theft; and that, as the time for the administration of the sacrament was approaching, the charge against Peggy —— ought to be judicially examined. Accordingly, a sessions was appointed. The elders, the accuser, the accused, and the witnesses were present. Beside these, there were also the two circuit preachers, Jonathan Crowther and Joseph Cownley, whom Crowther justly designates "two poor ciphers," seeing, though they might preside, they had

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 409.

1789 Age 86 no power to vote. The charge was, that when Peggy —— went to lodge with Peggy ——, the latter Peggy bought half an ounce of tea, and a farthing's worth of oil; that these household provisions did not last so long as usual; and that the probability was, that the property of Peggy —— had, to some extent, been feloniously appropriated by her lodger, Peggy ——. The affair was so serious, and withal so solemnly conducted, that it became needful to adjourn. At the second sessions, Crowther (who, though not allowed to vote, had a right to examine witnesses), asked the Peggy whose property was in question, how often she had made herself tea out of the half ounce, part of which had been stolen. Peggy dolorously answered, "Only seven times." She was then examined respecting her farthing's worth of oil; and it was ascertained, that, though it had not lasted as long as usual, she had been using a *new* feather in applying it; and it was thought that the *new* feather might have absorbed the quantity which Peggy, the lodger, was accused of stealing.

So the matter ended. Jonathan Crowther was disgusted, and told Pawson's ordained elders, that their discipline resembled the wisdom of Solomon, for it took cognisance of everything, from the hyssop on the wall to the cedars of mount Lebanon. The system had been instituted by Pawson, one of Wesley's confidential friends, and a preacher of seventeen years' standing. Crowther was young and inexperienced, only in the fifth year of his itinerant life; but he was gifted with common sense, and saw that, if this ordained machinery was continued, Methodism must be ruined. Wesley had been in Scotland twelve months before; but, strangely enough, appears to have been kept in ignorance of the new court at Glasgow. At all events, Jonathan Crowther now wrote to him; and received the following decisive answer.

"CORK, *May* 10, 1789.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—'Sessions'! 'elders'! We Methodists have no such custom, neither any of the churches of God that are under our care. I require *you*, Jonathan Crowther, immediately to dissolve that session (so called) at Glasgow. Discharge them from meeting any more. And if they will leave the society, let them leave it. We acknowledge only preachers, stewards, and leaders among us, over which the assistant in each circuit presides. You ought to have kept to the Methodist plan

from the beginning. Who had my authority to vary from it? If the people of Glasgow, or any other place, are weary of us, we will leave them to themselves. But we are willing to be still their servants, for Christ's sake, according to our own discipline, but no other. 1789 Age 86

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Before accompanying Wesley on his way back to England, we insert another letter, which is abridged in Wesley's collected works. Adam Clarke was in the isle of Jersey; but Wesley wished him to remove to Dublin, on account of the disturbed state of the society in that city. His old friend, the Rev. Edward Smyth, was now one of his bitter enemies. Hence the following.

"NEAR DUBLIN, *June* 25, 1789.

"DEAR ADAM,—You send me good news with regard to the islands. Who can hurt us, if God is on our side? Trials may come, but they are all good. I have not been so tried for many years. Every week and almost every day, I am bespattered in the public papers, either by Mr. Smyth, or by Mr. Mann, his curate. Smooth, but bitter as wormwood, are their words; and five or six of our richest members have left the society, because (they say) 'I have left the Church.' Many are in tears on account of it; and many are terribly frightened, and crying out, 'Oh! what will the end be?' What will it be? Why, 'Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and goodwill among men.'

"But, meantime, what is to be done? What will be the most effectual means to stem this furious torrent? I have just visited the classes, and find still in the society upwards of a thousand members; and, among these, many as deep Christians as any I have met with in Europe. But who is able to watch over them, that they may not be moved from their steadfastness? I know none more proper than Adam Clarke and his wife. Indeed, it may seem hard for them to go into a strange land again. Well, you may come to me at Leeds, at the latter end of next month; and if you can show me any that are more proper, I will send them in your stead.[2] That God may be glorified, is all that is desired by, dear Adam,

"Your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[3]

It has been already stated, that Wesley embarked for England on July 12. William Myles was with him, and says: "We had a pleasant passage; Mr. Wesley preached, and we sang hymns most of the way."[4] The passage lasted about six-and-thirty hours.

[1] Crowther's manuscript autobiography.
[2] Thomas Rutherford was sent in this emergency.
[3] *Wesleyan Times*, June 11, 1866.
[4] *Methodist Magazine*, 1797, p. 313.

1789 Age 86 After holding services at Chester and Northwich, Wesley made his way to Manchester, where he and Coke administered the sacrament to about twelve hundred communicants. At Dewsbury, where John Atlay had taken both the Methodists and their chapel, Wesley preached out of doors, in a drenching rain. He then proceeded to Leeds for the purpose of holding his annual conference; and, on the day before it began its sessions, preached from what would be a good conference text at the present time: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called."

As usual, Wesley, besides conducting the business of the conference, preached every day during its sittings; and his texts throughout were equally well timed, namely: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it." "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." "Well, Master, Thou hast said the truth; for there is one God; and there is none other but He." "I have a message from God unto thee." "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."[1] Here was a word in season for every one. Rare was the treat to attend a conference like this. On the conference Sunday, Wesley seems to have devolved the preaching upon others; but the day was not an idle one. He writes: "with the assistance of three other clergymen, I administered the sacrament to fifteen or sixteen hundred persons." When and where are such sacramental services held at present?

What may be called the *conference sermon* was preached by a local preacher, perhaps the only instance of the kind in Methodism's history. James Hamilton, M.D., was the preacher; his text, "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these." His sermon was printed, and was

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 115.

sold "at the Rev. Mr. Wesley's preaching houses in town and country," with the following title: "A Sermon preached at Leeds, July 29, 1789, before the Methodist Preachers, assembled in Conference, and a large body of the people in connection with them; and now published at the request of many of the Hearers." 1789 Age 86

This also was a sermon for the times, and evidently had Wesley's approbation. Its gist may be gathered from a few brief extracts.

After dwelling on the functions of the priests and scribes of the Jewish church, the preacher said:

"But as all external religion is of no use, any farther than as it advances the spiritual kingdom of Christ in the soul; and as the Jews too often lost sight of this, resting in their types and ceremonies, God called a race of men, named prophets, who had nothing to do with the priesthood; men full of the Holy Ghost; and sent them to declare that all external religion is nothing worth, when it fails to produce purity of heart. The prophets were, (with two or three exceptions,) what we call laymen,—taken from the common occupations in Judæa, chiefly farmers and shepherds,—holy men, men of strong faith, their hearts overflowing with zeal for the honour of God,—men of invincible courage, practising the strictest temperance, and clothed in the plainest manner."

Dr. Hamilton then proceeded to argue, that Methodist preachers bore some analogy to these special messengers of God in ancient times; and after an affectionate allusion to the two Wesleys, and to Whitefield, continued:

"And here mark the Divine wisdom. Although their brother priests in the Church thrust them from them, and although their names were cast out as evil above the names of all men, they ever retained a strong and affectionate attachment to the men who had thus abused them, and to the Church of which they were members; and this has been, in the overruling hand of God, the great means of carrying on that glorious spiritual work which we now behold. Had it not been for this attachment, the Methodists would have, long ere this, become a distinct body, separate from the Church and all others; and, I fear, in consequence thereof, would have sunk into the dead formality of the numerous sects, with which the world is harassed and divided."

Then proceeding to address the assembled conference, the preacher added:

"Will ye bear with me, ye spiritual messengers of the Lord, while I presume to say a few words to *you?* See with what a holy calling ye are called; for what a glorious and important end God has raised you up!

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Even to set spiritual religion before the eyes of all men; to cry to men of all opinions, sects, and parties, 'Trust not unto lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord are these'; to bring them, from resting in external duties, to the possession of internal holiness; from an opinion in the head, to the love of God in the heart. Let then the dead bury their dead! Let the formalist and the pharisee, the church bigot and the sectary, contend for ways of thinking, gestures in worship, and modes of church government; but may ye never forget, that ye are sent for a nobler end; that your commission is the same as Paul's, not to baptize, but to preach the gospel. Although I am neither a prophet, nor the son of a prophet; yet forgive me when I express my fears, that, if ever the Methodists leave their several churches; if ever ye set up as a separate people by external distinctions and creeds; if ye substitute a silken gown and sash for rough garments and a leathern girdle, and call one another, Rabbi! Rabbi! then the glory will depart from you, and God will raise up another people. He will call other lay preachers, no matter by what name; and He will send them to call *you* from opinions and forms, and to sound in *your* ears, 'Trust not unto lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these.'"

Hamilton's sermon, to say the least, was ingenious; and referring as it does to the great topic of the day, separation from the Church, these extracts will not be regarded as out of place.

Wesley says, there were about a hundred preachers present at the conference; Atmore says, about a hundred and thirty;[1] be that as it may, one hundred and fifteen of them signed a declaration, that they entirely approved of Methodist chapels being settled on the conference plan; and, among these, were several who, soon after, distinguished themselves as Methodist reformers, namely, William Thom, Henry Taylor, and Alexander Kilham.

The principal subjects discussed are thus referred to in Wesley's journal.

"July 28—The case of separation from the Church was largely considered, and we were all unanimous against it. August 1—We considered the case of Dewsbury house, which the self-elected trustees have robbed us of. The point they contended for was this,—that they should have a right of rejecting any preachers they disapproved of. But this, we say, would destroy itinerancy. So they chose John Atlay for a preacher, who adopted William Eels for his curate. Nothing remained but to build another preaching house, towards which we subscribed £206 on the spot."

"Besides these, some other points were decided; namely,

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 115.

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that the preachers should read the rules of the society in every society once a quarter; that no person should be admitted to lovefeasts without a society ticket, or a note from the assistant; that every watchnight should be continued till midnight; that the collections at lovefeasts should be most conscientiously given to the poor; that preachers should not go out to supper, and should be home before nine at night; that preachers' children should dress exactly according to the band rules; that only one preacher should come in future to the conference from Scotland, except those that were to be admitted into full connexion; and that no books should be published without Wesley's sanction, and that those approved by him should be printed at his press in London, and be sold by his book steward.

We give these legislative enactments as we find them. The last bore hardly on strong minded writers, like Thomas Taylor and Joseph Benson.

The day after the conference concluded, Wesley set out for London, and thence, for the last time, to Cornwall. His first day's journey was seventy miles, and his second eighty, and to this amount of labour was added preaching. One day in London was devoted to business; on the next, which was Sunday, the patriarchal preacher delivered two sermons in the chapel in City Road, set out at seven o'clock, p.m., travelled all night, and reached Bristol about noon on Monday. Without delay, he hurried on to Plymouth, preaching at Taunton, Collumpton, and Exeter. At Plymouth there had been, what he calls, a "senseless quarrel"; but he administered the sacrament to six hundred people, and preached to an enormous congregation out of doors.

Arriving at St. Austell, he says: "I knew not where to preach, the street being so dirty, and the preaching house so small. At length, we determined to squeeze as many as we could into the preaching house; and truly God was there." At Truro, the street, leading to the chapel, being blocked up with starving tinners demanding an increase to their wages, and a troop of soldiers who were keeping peace, Wesley was obliged to preach "under the coinage hall." Forty years had elapsed since he was last at Falmouth, and then he was "taken prisoner by an immense mob, gaping and roaring

1789. Age 86 like lions; now high and low lined the street, from one end of the town to the other, out of stark love and kindness"; and he preached to the largest congregation he had ever seen in Cornwall, except in or near Redruth. The same sort of scenes awaited him at Helstone, St. Just, Newlyn, and Penzance. In Gwennap pit his congregation was calculated at five-and-twenty thousand. This remarkable spot was first used by Wesley, as a place for preaching, in 1762, on account of the wind being so boisterous as to prevent him occupying his usual stand in the town itself. "At a small distance," says he, "was a hollow capable of containing many thousand people. I stood on one side of this amphitheatre, toward the top, with the people beneath, and on all sides." Many since then had been the marvellous scenes he had witnessed in this "the finest natural amphitheatre in the kingdom." There can be little doubt, that the estimated numbers were sometimes greater than the real; but still, it was here, on this Cornish common, that Wesley had the largest congregations to whom he ever preached. The place is now one of the "sights" of Cornwall. Here an annual service has been held ever since Wesley's death; and now, on every Whit-monday, thousands wend their way, in every style of conveyance, from the donkey cart of the poor peasant to the dashing carriage of the wealthy squire, and assembling within the area and around the banks of this consecrated hollow, join in one vast act of worship, offered to the God of heaven. Here we have Methodism's yearly pilgrimage, made by hosts of Cornish Methodists, not to honour man, but to commemorate the mercies of their fathers' God, and to ask His help and blessing on behalf of themselves and their posterity.

Eleven days were spent in Cornwall, during which Wesley preached, at least, seventeen times, nine of which were in the open air. "There is," says he, "a fair prospect in Cornwall, from Launceston to the Land's End."

On his way back, we find him preaching at Tavistock, Plymouth, Exeter, Tiverton, Halberton, Taunton, Castle Carey, Ditcheat, and Shepton Mallet, eleven sermons, in seven days, besides the travelling from Cornwall to Bristol. No wonder that the venerable traveller sometimes started at three o'clock in the morning!

Bristol was the centre of Wesley's labours from September 5 to October 5. On one of the Sundays, he preached twice in his own chapel, and once in Temple church; but writes: "It was full as much as I could do. I doubt I must not hereafter attempt to preach more than twice a day." 1789 Age 86

On October 5, he started from Bristol at four o'clock in the morning, for London. Arriving in town, he wrote:

"I am now as well, by the good providence of God, as I am likely to be while I live. My sight is so decayed, that I cannot well read by candlelight; but I can write as well as ever; and my strength is much lessened, so that I cannot easily preach above twice a day. But, I bless God, my memory is not much decayed; and my understanding is as clear as it has been these fifty years."

Having spent five days in London, he set out for Norfolk. The remainder of the year was employed, as usual, partly in London, and partly in his long accustomed preaching tours to the surrounding counties. On the last Sunday in the year, he occupied the pulpit of St. Luke's, his parish church. "The tables are turned," says he; "I have now more invitations to preach in churches than I can accept of."

One of his London retreats was, what he calls, "the lovely family at Balham." This was, doubtless, the family of George Wolff, Esq., one of his executors,—a merchant, and also consul general to the court of Denmark,—a gentleman of unassuming manners, deeply pious, and one of the most liberal of the metropolitan Methodists,—for many years the confidential friend of Wesley, and who died at Balham, in 1828, at the age of ninety-two.[1]

Before concluding the year, we insert a further selection from Wesley's letters.

The first was to his nephew, Samuel Wesley, the musical genius, now twenty-three years of age, and is strikingly characteristic of the venerable writer.

"NEAR BRISTOL, *September* 16, 1789.

"MY DEAR SAMMY,—It gives me pleasure to hear, that you have so much resolution, that you go to bed at ten, and rise at four o'clock. Let not the increase of cold affright you from your purposes. Bear your cross, and it will bear you. I advise you carefully to read over Kempis, the Life

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1828, p. 286.

1789 Age 86 of Gregory Lopez, and that of Mons. de Renty. They are all among my brother's books.

"I am, dear Sammy, your affectionate uncle and friend,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

The next beautifully illustrates the benevolence of Wesley, and the faithfulness of his friendship. Mr. Salmon, at the time referred to, was not a member of the Methodist society, but only an occasional hearer; and, yet, the instance of his liberality, which Wesley mentions, was not the only one which does honour to his character. In 1762, Wesley opened a new chapel at Shepton Mallet, with a mudden floor; and, in this state, it was occupied for years, when Mr. Salmon gave the stewards £40 to improve the floor, and to supply back rails to the benches.[2] Richard Rodda, to whom the following was addressed, now filled the office of assistant at Manchester.

"WALLINGFORD, *October* 24, 1789.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—You are a man whom I can trust: whatever you do, you will do it with your might. Some years since, we wanted a preaching place near Coleford, in Somersetshire. A neighbouring gentleman, Mr. Salmon, gave us ground to build on, and timber for the house, and desired me to use his house as my own. He is now by wicked men reduced to want.

"I am informed, a master for a poorhouse is wanted at Manchester. Pray inquire, and, if it be so, leave no means untried to procure the place for him. Apply, in my name, to B. Barlow, D. Yates, T. Phillips, Dr. Easton, Mr. Brocklehurst, Stonehouse, and all that have a regard for me. Make all the interest you can. Leave no stone unturned. 'Join hands with God to make a good man live.' I hope you will send me word in London, that you have exerted yourself, and are not without a prospect of success.

"I am, dear Richard, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[3]

The following letter is now, for the first time, published. The Liverpool Methodists were about to build their Mount Pleasant chapel. An expenditure of £1100 startled Wesley. What would he have said to the expenditure of as many thousands? And yet Liverpool Methodism does the one now

[1] *Wesley Banner*, 1851, p. 405.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1827, p. 285.
[3] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 478.

with as much nonchalance as it did the other then. The letter was addressed to Mr. Lawrence Frost. 1789 Age 86

"LONDON, *October* 23, 1789.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—You are bold people! Two hundred pounds, purchase money, besides nine hundred pounds! But I do not use to damp any good design. Go on in the name of God. It is true, your deed is clumsy enough. I am surprised, that no Methodist will take my advice. I have more *experience*, in these things, than any attorney in the land. And have I not the Methodist interest as much at heart? Oh, why will you alter the beautiful deed we have already? why will you employ any attorney at all? Only to seek a knot in a bulrush; only to puzzle the cause. Well, comfort yourself. You will not long be troubled with

"Your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

The next, which was written to William Black, in Nova Scotia, is interesting as containing a reference to Wesley's labours, and his professed adherence to the Church.

"LONDON, *November* 21, 1789.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Your letter has given me great satisfaction. My fears are vanished away. I am persuaded, brother Wray, Stretton, and you, will go on hand in hand, and that each of you will take an equal share in the common labour. I do so myself. I labour now just as I did twenty or forty years ago. By all means, proceed by common consent, and think not of *separating* from the Church of England. I am more and more confirmed in the judgment which our whole conference passed on that head, in the year 1758.

"I am your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Thirty-two years before, Wesley preached his first and last sermon in Bideford. For long it had been a barren soil, but, in 1788, was made a circuit town; and now simple minded, sanctified Samuel Bardsley was labouring with great success. "I am glad," says Wesley to this godly man, "to hear so good an account of the work of God at Bideford. It had held out long, and seemed to bid defiance to the gospel."[2] Bardsley was all alone; and Michael Fenwick, fond of meddling, wrote to him: "Dear Sammy,—Write a pressing letter every post, until Mr. Wesley sends you another preacher. It is cruel to

[1] Black's Memoirs, p. 251.
[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 472.

1789 Age 86 let you be all alone in that great wide circuit; and I will tell Mr. Wesley so. I am glad, that Col. Buck is the reigning mayor with you. Pray, when you see him, give my Christian respects to him, and tell him, I am glad he is raised to be the first magistrate in Bideford." Fenwick was without an appointment, and was resident at Hexham. Wesley took him at his word, and sent him to Bideford. Poor Michael seems to have been a stormy petrel. No sooner was he come, than there was serious trouble. Hence the following.

"*December* 25, 1789.

"MOST ESTEEMED FRIEND,—Yesterday, I waited upon the lord lieutenant for this county, Lord Fortescue, and we spent an hour together in a close, pointed conversation, respecting the hot persecution at Bideford. His lordship told me, he will go over and inquire into matters, for he thinks our lives are in danger, seeing that the mayor of Bideford and the other justices have thrown open the flood gates to the mob, to do with us as they please. I recommended to his lordship the 23rd of Matthew, (only changing the word Jerusalem into that of Bideford,) in which our blessed Lord describes the men. His lordship is greatly alarmed at our present situation; but, the next week, he will be with his majesty, and will let him know of our treatment; and they must take the consequences. My dear brother, never fear: only believe; and we shall see great things in due time. I shall conquer, or die in the field.

"I am your affectionate friend,

"MICHAEL FENWICK."[1]

The above not only furnishes a glimpse of Methodist affairs at Bideford, but casts light on the following letters, which Wesley sent to Bardsley.

"NORTHAMPTON, *November* 25, 1789.

"DEAR SAMMY,—Yours of the 21st instant was sent to me hither. You have done exceeding well to take the upper room. If need be, we will help you out. Let us have no law, if it be possible to avoid it: that is the last and worst remedy. Try every other remedy first. It is a good providence, that the mayor of Bideford is a friendly man. Prayer will avail much in all cases. Encourage our poor people to be instant in prayer. Take care of poor Michael; and do not forget,

"Dear Sammy, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

"NEWCASTLE UNDER LYNE, *March* 29, 1790.

"DEAR SAMMY,—Take particular care, that neither Michael Fenwick, nor any other, give any just offence; and especially, that they

[1] Manuscript letter. [2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1825, p. 675.

offend not God; then He will make your enemies to be at peace with you. 1789 Age 86

"If I remember well, I did write to the mayor of Bideford; and I expect, that makes him more quiet. By meekness, gentleness, and patience, with faith and prayer, you will prevail at Torrington also. You have only to go on calmly and steadily, and God will arise and maintain His own cause. Only let us labour to have a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man.

"I am, dear Sammy, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

All must admire this advice. During this year of storm and tempest, the Bideford Methodists increased from eighty-three to one hundred and forty.

We insert one more letter. In the Isle of Man there were 2569 Methodists, within five hundred of the number there are at present. Then there was one circuit; now there are four: then there were three itinerant preachers; now there are ten. George Holder was assistant; and to him Wesley addressed the following.

"NEAR LONDON, *November* 29, 1789

"DEAR GEORGE,—You did well to remember the case of Dewsbury house, and to send what you could to Mr. Mather.

"I exceedingly disapprove of publishing anything in the Manx language. On the contrary, we should do everything in our power to abolish it from the earth, and persuade every member of our society to learn and talk English. This would be much hindered by providing them with hymns in their own language. Therefore, gently and quietly let the proposal drop.

"I hope you and your fellow labourers are of one heart. Peace be with your spirits!

"I am, dear George, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Wesley would take no step to gratify the linguistic folly of the Manx Methodists; but he was still actively employed in supplying books to his English readers. His publications, in 1789, were:

1. "The Life of Mr. Silas Told." 18mo, 113 pages.

2. "A Short Account of the Life and Death of Jane Newland, of Dublin." 12mo, 12 pages.

3. "An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal,

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xii., p. 473. [2] Ibid. vol. xiii., p. 108.

1789 Age 86 from September 4, 1782, to June 28, 1786." 12mo, 134 pages.

4. "Minutes of Several Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and others. From the year 1744, to the year 1789." 12mo, 51 pages.

5. His chief publication, of course, was his *Arminian Magazine*, 8vo, 679 pages.

As usual, it contains six of his own sermons. Those on Man, Faith, and the Omnipresence of God, are among the ablest he ever wrote. That on the Rich Man and Lazarus is a powerful exposition of the text, which Wesley believed to be, not merely a parable, but a history. The sermon on Riches is boldly faithful, and must have made the rich Methodists of that period wince and tremble; as, indeed, it ought to make such Methodists wince and tremble at the present day. The following, addressed to rich men, are the concluding paragraphs.

"O how pitiable is your condition! And who is able to help you? You need more plain dealing than any men in the world; and you meet with less. For how few dare to speak as plain to *you*, as they would to one of your servants? No man living that either hopes to gain anything by your favour, or fears to lose anything by your displeasure. Oh that God would give me acceptable words, and cause them to sink deep into your hearts! Many of you have known me long, well-nigh from your infancy! You have frequently helped me, when I stood in need. May I not say, you loved me? But now the time of our parting is at hand; my feet are just stumbling upon the dark mountains. I would leave one word with you, before I go hence; and you may remember it when I am no more seen.

"O let your heart be whole with God! Seek your happiness in Him, and Him alone. Beware, that you cleave not to the dust! This earth is not your place. See that you use this world as not abusing it; *use* the world, and *enjoy* God. Sit as loose to all things here below, as if you were a poor beggar. Be a good steward of the manifold gifts of God; that, when you are called to give an account of your stewardship, He may say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'"

Nothing can be plainer than that, for several of the last years of his life, Wesley regarded the growing riches of the Methodists as one of their greatest dangers. His magazines, to say nothing of his letters and his journals, are full of this. Hence, his eighteen lengthy extracts on the

Surest Way of Thriving, running through the whole of the magazine of 1788, and part of that for 1789. Hence, the solemn warning, contained in his brief article on "The Origin of Image Worship among Christians"; an article meriting the serious thought of those wealthy Methodists, who are adorning (?) their chapels with painted windows and emblematic pulpits. Citations might be multiplied, all tending to show that, rightly or wrongly, Wesley regarded the growth of riches among Christians, not as a good to be desired, but as a necessary evil, and a serious danger. 1789 Age 86

The only sermon, which remains unnoticed, is that on God's Vineyard,—a sermon on the doctrine, spiritual helps, discipline, and outward protection of Methodism. He tells us that, notwithstanding the assistance they received from Peter Bohler, he and the other Oxford Methodists "were never clearly convinced, that we are justified by faith alone, till they carefully consulted the homilies of the Church of England, and compared them with the sacred writings, particularly St. Paul's epistle to the Romans." He propounds the principle, which Dr. James Hamilton enlarged upon in his conference sermon, already mentioned, that for the Methodists to have become a separate sect, like the Moravians, "would have been a direct contradiction to the whole design of God in raising them up, to spread scriptural religion throughout the land, among people of every denomination, leaving every one to hold his own opinions, and to follow his own mode of worship." Having shown the great advantages that the Methodists had enjoyed, his early hopes concerning them, and how these hopes had hardly been realised, he concludes with the following address to the rich members of the society.

"O ye that have riches in possession, once more hear the word of the Lord! Ye that are rich in this world, that have food to eat, and raiment to put on, and something over! Are you clear of the curse? of loving the world? Are you sensible of your danger? Do you feel, 'How hardly will they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven'? Do you continue unburnt in the midst of fire? Are you untouched with the love of the world? Are you clear from the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life? Do you *put a knife to your throat* when you sit down to meat, lest your *table* should be a *snare to you?* Is not your belly your god? Is not eating and drinking, or any other

1789 Age 86

pleasure of sense, the greatest pleasure you enjoy? Do not you seek happiness in dress, furniture, pictures, gardens; or anything else that pleases the eye? Do not you grow soft and delicate? unable to bear cold, heat, the wind or the rain, as you did when you were poor? Are you not increasing in goods, laying up treasures on earth; instead of restoring to God, in the poor, not so much or so much, but all that you can spare? Surely 'it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven!'"

There are other contributions by Wesley, in the *Magazine* for 1789, which ought to have attention. There is an exquisitely drawn up article on "The Nature of Inspiration, clearly explained and enforced, as applicable to the Old and New Testament"; and also his piece "On the Manners of the Times"; neither of which has been included in Wesley's collected works. And there are also his "Thoughts on Separation from the Church," and his "Thoughts upon a late Phenomenon;" both of them really on the same subject. After showing how revivals of religion have generally ended in the formation of separate sects, and thereby rarely lasted, according to Luther's *dictum*, "longer than a generation, that is, thirty years," Wesley remarks:

"The Methodists have been solicited again and again, to separate from the Established Church, and to form themselves into a distinct body, independent of all other religious societies. Thirty years ago, this was seriously considered among them, at a general conference. All the arguments, urged on one side and the other, were considered at large; and it was determined, without one dissenting voice, that they 'ought not to separate from the Church.'

"This is a new thing in the world; this is the peculiar glory of the people called Methodists. In spite of all manner of temptations, they will not separate from the Church. What many so earnestly covet, they abhor; they will not be a distinct body. Now what instance have we of this before, either in ancient or modern history, of a body of people, in such circumstances, who will not be a distinct party, but choose to remain in connection with their own church, that they may be more effectually the servants of all? This, I say again, is an utterly new phenomenon! I never saw, heard, or read of anything like it. The Methodists will not separate from the Church, although continually reproached for doing it; although it would free them from abundance of inconveniences, and make their path much smoother and easier; and although many of their friends earnestly advise, and their enemies provoke them to it,—the clergy in particular; most of whom, far from thanking them for continuing in the Church, use all the means in their power, fair and unfair, to drive them out of it."

1790.

WESLEY'S career is drawing to a close. He himself was on the "Delectable mountains," basking in the sheen of the celestial city; but all around him, or rather beneath him, was darkness and confusion. The riots of 1789 were about to culminate in the indescribable horrors of the French revolution. Burke wrote against this terrible upheaving; Dr. Price applauded it. English newspapers, all at once, became Gallican and republican; and overflowed with abuse of the old constitution,—abuse of the Church,—abuse of the aristocracy,—abuse of almost everything except the French insurrection, and the men who made it. Thomas Paine and his friends were in the highest feather; and infidel and revolutionary pamphlets were published with prodigal profusion. Even Fox, in parliament, declared that the French army, by refusing to obey the court and to act against the people, had set a glorious example to all the armies of Europe; to which Burke, who had hitherto been Fox's friend, replied, that the revolutionists were "an irrational, unprincipled, proscribing, confiscating, plundering, ferocious, bloody, tyrannical democracy." It was amid such excitement, that Wesley spent his last days on earth. 1790 Age 87

He began the year in London, and wrote in his journal:

"1790, January 1.—I am now an old man, decayed from head to foot: my eyes are dim; my right hand shakes much; my mouth is hot and dry every morning; I have a lingering fever almost every day; my motion is weak and slow. However, blessed be God, I do not slack my labour; I can preach and write still."

Henry Moore observes:

"Being in the house with him when he wrote thus, I was greatly surprised. I knew it must be as he said; but I could not imagine his weakness was so great. He still rose at his usual hour, four o'clock, and went through the many duties of the day, not indeed with the same apparent vigour, but without complaint, and with a degree of resolution that was astonishing."[1]

[1] Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 380.

1790 Age 87 On Saturday, January 2, he preached at Snowsfields. The next day, Sunday, he held the covenant service in the City Road chapel, at which nearly two thousand persons were present. A few days were then devoted to writing letters, two of which we give. The first has not before been published. It was addressed to Daniel Jackson, then appointed to the Stockport circuit.

"LONDON, *January* 2, 1790.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—It is no wonder many of the societies should be in a poor condition, considering what poor care has lately been taken of them. They will soon find the difference.

"The books that are damaged you may give away as you judge proper.

"None ought to have made a collection for any place before the house at Dewsbury was built. However, do what you can, and you do enough.

"I am, with love to sister Jackson,

"Your affectionate friend and brother,

"J. WESLEY."

The next was written to John Mason, the assistant in the St. Austell circuit.

"NEAR LONDON, *January* 13, 1790.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—As long as I live, the people shall have no share in choosing either stewards or leaders among the Methodists. We have not, and never had, any such custom. We are no republicans, and never intend to be. It would be better for those, that are so minded, to go quietly away. I have been uniform, both in doctrine and discipline, for above these fifty years; and it is a little too late for me to turn into a new path, now I am old and grey headed. Neither good old brother Porna (God bless him!) expects it from me, nor brother Wood, nor brother Flamank.

"If you and I shall be called hence this year, we may bless God that we have not lived in vain. Come, let us have a few more strokes at Satan's kingdom, and then we shall depart in peace!

"I am, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY"[1]

On Sunday, January 17, Wesley buried Mrs. Dornford, a good woman; and preached her funeral sermon. In the afternoon, he preached to a large congregation, in the church of Great St. Helen's.

On Monday, January 25, he went to Dorking, "and

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1830, p 251.

laboured to awaken a harmless, honest, drowsy people, who, for many years, seemed to stand stock still, neither increasing nor decreasing." 1790 Age 87

On January 29, Wesley writes: "We held our general quarterly meeting, whereby it appeared, that the society received and expended about £3000 a year; but our expense still exceeds our income."

The next eight days were employed in meeting the London classes, containing about 2500 members.

During the month of February, we find him preaching a funeral sermon for Robert Windsor; and sermons to children —beautiful sights—at West Street, and at City Road. He retired to his friend Mr. Wolff's, at Balham, "to finish his sermons, and to put all his little things in order." He "submitted to importunity, and once more sat for his picture." He "dined at Mr. Baker's, one of the sheriffs of London; a plain man, who still lived in an inn yard!"

On Sunday, February 28, which, for five months, was his last day in London, he preached to enormous congregations, at City Road, West Street, and Brentford; and then started off on his long journey to the north. Before we follow him, two short letters may be welcome; the first to Adam Clarke at Bristol, the second to Miss Bisson in the Channel islands.

"LONDON, *February* 11, 1790.

"DEAR ADAM,—On Monday, March 1, I hope to set out hence; and to preach that evening, and on Tuesday, at half-past six o'clock, at Bath. On Thursday, if he desires it, I will dine at Mr. Durbin's; and, on Monday following, begin as usual to meet the classes. I am not at all sorry that James Gore is removed from this evil world. You and I shall follow him in due time; as soon as our work is done. Many of our friends have been lately gathered into the garner, as ripe shocks of wheat. Peace be with both your spirits! I am, dear Adam, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

"LONDON, *February* 13, 1790.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—I love to see your name at the bottom of a letter, especially when it brings me the good news, that your spirit is still rejoicing in God your Saviour. My sight is so far decayed, that I cannot well read a small print by candlelight; but I can write almost as well as ever I could; and it does me no harm, but rather good, to preach once or twice a day. A few days since, I had a letter from one of our sisters in

[1] Dunn's Life of Clarke, p. 72.

1790 Age 87

Scotland, whose experience agrees much with yours; only she goes farther; she speaks of being 'taken up into heaven, surrounded with the blessed Trinity, and let into God the Father.' I commend you to His care; and am, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Wesley[1] spent a fortnight at Bath, Bristol, and Kingswood; preached daily; visited the sick; and met the Bristol classes. On one of the Sundays, at least, he preached thrice; having on the night previous occupied the pulpit of his friend, the Rev. Joseph Easterbrook, in Temple church. He writes: "Mr. Easterbrook has lately been very ill; but God has again lifted up his head to be a father to the poor a little longer."

This indefatigable clergyman was the son of the Bristol bellman; was educated at Kingswood school; became assistant master at Trevecca college; obtained ordination; was presented to Temple church by the Bristol corporation; and succeeded James Roquet as chaplain of Newgate prison.[2] Fletcher, in writing to the Countess of Huntingdon concerning him, says, when he first entered Trevecca, he began to live upon water and potatoes; and yet, besides attending to his scholastic duties, he preached every evening in the week, and occasionally as many as four times on Sundays. Atmore states that, in Bristol, it was Easterbrook's invariable rule to send those, who were awakened under his ministry, to meet in class among the Methodists. His work was now nearly ended. When Wesley came again to Bristol, in September, he wrote: "Mr. Easterbrook is ill of a disorder which no physician understands, and which it seems God alone can cure. He is a pattern to all Bristol, and indeed to all in England; having, besides his other incessant labours, which were never intermitted, preached in every house in his parish!" Within four months after this, Easterbrook was dead, and Henry Moore preached for him a funeral sermon, which was printed. He died on the 21st of January, 1791, in the fortieth year of his age, some of his last words being "God does all things well. I have no fear of death or of judgment."[3]

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 105.
[2] Pawson's manuscripts.
[3] Moore's sermon.

While at Bristol, Wesley addressed the following characteristic letter, not before published, to Jasper Winscomb, one of his preachers in the Isle of Wight. What would Wesley have said concerning the circuit divisions of the present day? 1790 Age 87

"BRISTOL, *March* 13, 1790.

"DEAR JASPER,—The story of Thomas Whitwood is very remarkable, and the story is well told, and God has done much honour to him by the happy effects which have been consequent on his death. I am in no haste at all concerning building, without having paid some more of our debts. I am likewise in no haste to multiply preachers, or to divide circuits. Most of our circuits are too small rather than too large. I wish we had no circuit with fewer than three preachers on it, or less than four hundred miles' riding in four weeks. Certainly, no circuit shall be divided before conference. If we do not take care we shall all degenerate into milksops. 'Soldiers of Christ, arise!'

"I am, dear Jasper, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."

On leaving London, the following circular, bearing Wesley's signature, was issued, indicating to his friends the places he meant to visit, in his journey to the north. It furnishes a bird's eye view of the Herculean labours of an old man nearly eighty-seven years of age, and also helps to fill up a gap in Wesley's journal. It must be remembered, that the means of transit in 1790 were not what they are at present; and that, at every place mentioned, Wesley preached at least once, and often several times more than that. It will also be seen, that from three to four days were employed in some of the principal societies, where he arranged to spend his Sundays.

"LONDON, *March* 1, 1790.

"As many persons desire to know where I am from this time till the conference, I here set down my route, which, if God permit, I shall keep till that time.

March.

Monday, 15, Stroud; 16, Gloucester; 17, Worcester; 18, Stourport; 19, Birmingham.

Monday, 22, Wednesbury; 23, Dudley and Wolverhampton; 24, Madeley; 25, Salop; 26, Madeley; 27, Newcastle under Lyne; 28, Lane End and Burslem.

Monday, 29, Congleton; 30, Macclesfield.

April.

Thursday, 1, Stockport; 2, Manchester.

Monday, 5, Nantwich and Liverpool; 7, Warrington and Chester; 9, Wigan; 10, Bolton.

1790 Monday, 12, Blackburn; 13, Colne; 17, Keighley; 18, Haworth and Halifax.
Age 87 Tuesday, 20, Huddersfield; 21, Dewsbury; 24, Wakefield; 25, Birstal and Leeds.
Tuesday, 27, Bradford; 29, Otley.

May.

Saturday, 1, Parkgate; 2, York; 4, Pocklington; 6, Newcastle.
Monday, 10, Alnwick; 12, Dunbar; 13, Edinburgh.
Tuesday, 18, Dundee; 19, Arbroath; 20, Aberdeen.

"N.B. I have not yet finally settled the rest of my plan. I probably shall, if I come to York. Many persons are continually teasing me to visit more places. Now let them judge whether I have not work enough.

"JOHN WESLEY."

To this circular, two postscripts were added, by some other hand, namely:

"Those persons, who have occasion to write to Mr. Wesley, are requested to direct their letters according to this plan, and not to London."

"Our friends here earnestly desire that Mr. Wesley may be remembered in prayer, especially at the next quarterly fast, that his strength may be continued, and, if it please God, increased also."

Such was Wesley's plan of travel and of labour for the next ten weeks; but even this was a mere outline; and it will be found, as we follow him, that he preached at many places besides the above mentioned.

At Stroud, on March 15, hundreds were unable to get into the chapel. On the day following, he preached to two other crowds, at Painswick, and at Gloucester, March 17, the chapel at Tewkesbury was not large enough to hold the noonday congregation; and at Worcester, in the evening, he "found much comfort among a well established people."

Twenty years before this, Stourport did not exist; now there were a couple of streets, at least, and also a prosperous trade. In 1780, John Cowell came with his family from Wolverhampton; and, soon after, Thomas Hanby preached the first Methodist sermon, in an upper room, at Mr. Morris's.[1] A chapel was soon erected, towards which Mr. Cowell was a large contributor. The chapel was to be occupied by both Calvinist and Arminian preachers. The Arminians were

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1832, p. 594.

speedily ejected; and, rather than appeal to law, Mr. Cowell, at his own expense, built another and a larger chapel, which Wesley opened in 1788. He now visited them again; had a crowded congregation; was pleased with their attention; but writes: "The moment I ceased speaking, fourscore or one hundred begun talking all at once. I do not remember to have been present at such a scene before. This must be amended; otherwise, if I should live, I will see Stourport no more." 1790 Age 87

March 19, at eleven a.m., Wesley preached at Quinton; and, at night, to a densely packed congregation at Birmingham. Next day, Saturday, the same scene was repeated; and, on Sunday, when he opened a new meeting-house, and preached twice, hundreds of people were unable to get in. Joseph Benson, at this time stationed in Birmingham, met Wesley at Stourport, and writes: "I found him much stronger and better than I expected. Still his sight is so defective, that he is much at a loss in giving out hymns, in reading his text, and in referring to any portion of Scripture. In conversation, he seemed much as usual, lively and entertaining."[1]

On Monday, March 22, at Wednesbury, as many as could *squeezed* into the chapel, and the rest were fain to be listeners outside. The next day, he opened a new meeting-house, "one of the neatest in England," at Dudley; and, at night, preached at Wolverhampton. Three days were spent at Madeley and Salop; one sermon was written; and four were preached. Week day though it was, Madeley church was crowded; and so also was the meeting place at Salop; but concerning the Salopians, Wesley writes: "I was much ashamed for them. The moment I had done speaking, I suppose fifty of them were talking all at once; and no wonder they had neither sense nor good manners, for they were gentlefolks!"

The halt at Madeley gave him the opportunity, not only to write his sermon on the wedding garment, but to write letters to his friends. To Adam Clarke he expresses the opinion, that "animal magnetism is diabolical from the

[1] Benson's Life, by Macdonald, p. 209.

1790 Age 87 beginning to the end;" he also advises him to consult Dr. Whitehead about his health, and requests him to follow all the doctor's directions, "except the leaving off preaching"; naively adding, "I think, if I had taken this advice many years since, I should not have been a living man."[1]

Charles Atmore had recently commenced a Sunday-school, in the Orphan House, at Newcastle, consisting of seventy teachers and more than a thousand children.[2] And Michael Longridge, one of Wesley's best local preachers, in the north of England, had published a 12mo pamphlet of 13 pages, entitled, "Sunday-schools Recommended as a Religious Institution: with a Plan for their Extension at a small Expense." All this had Wesley's cordial approval; and, hence, the following letter to Atmore, which, besides a reference to the Sunday-schools, also contains an addition to Wesley's *preaching plan.*

"MADELEY, *March* 24, 1790.

"DEAR CHARLES,—I am glad you have set up Sunday-schools in Newcastle. It is one of the noblest institutions which has been seen in Europe for some centuries, and will increase more and more, provided the teachers and inspectors do their duties. Nothing can prevent the increase of this blessed work, but the neglect of the instruments. Therefore, be sure to watch over these with all care, that they may not grow weary in well doing.

"I shall be at Darlington, if God permit, on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 4th and 5th; on Thursday, at Durham to preach at twelve o'clock at noon; and at Newcastle between four and five in the afternoon. Grace be with you and yours!

"I am, dear Charles, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[3]

To return. According to announcement, Wesley, on Saturday, March 27, preached at Newcastle under Lyne; and, on the day following, twice, to large crowds, in the open air, at Lane End, and at Burslem. At nine o'clock on Monday morning, he opened Tunstall new chapel, "the most elegant he had seen since he left Bath"[1]; and, at night, preached at Congleton, the clergyman of the parish, "the mayor, and all the heads of the town," forming a part of his

[1] Dunn's Life of Clarke, pp. 72, 73.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 119.
[3] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 113.

congregation. He quietly remarks: "That I might not overshoot them, I preached on, 'So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.'" 1790 Age 87

Two days were spent at Macclesfield, and two crowded audiences were addressed. Here, also, one of his horses died. On April 1, he had a large congregation at Stockport. The next day, Good Friday, he preached at Oldham and Manchester; and, at the latter place, again on Saturday.

On Easter Sunday, at Manchester, he preached twice, and held a sacramental service at which there were about sixteen hundred communicants!

Next day, he preached thrice, at Altrincham, Northwich, and Chester; and, in each place, had crowded congregations. At Warrington, "the chapel was well filled with serious hearers"; and, at Liverpool, multitudes were not able to get in. At Wigan, the chapel "was more than filled"; and "in the lovely house at Bolton" he preached to, what he calls, "one of the loveliest congregations in England." This was on April 10; and, from this date to May 24, there is a chasm in Wesley's journal, which we shall endeavour to fill up; first of all, however, giving an unpublished letter addressed to Thomas Taylor, who, with William Simpson, was stationed at Hull.

"MANCHESTER, *April* 4, 1790.

"DEAR TOMMY,—I did not approve of Dr. Coke's making collections either in yours or any other circuit. I told him so, and am not well pleased with his doing it. It was very ill done. It is exceeding probable, that sea bathing will be of use to brother Simpson, especially if he be temperate in all things.

"I do not know what you mean concerning talking 'about the Church.' I advise all our brethren, that have been brought up in the Church, to continue there; and there I leave the matter. The Methodists are to spread life among all denominations; which they will do, till they form a separate sect.

"I am, dear Tommy, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."

According to Wesley's plan, the week, intervening between April 10 and 17, was to be spent in visiting Blackburn, Colne, Keighley, Haworth, and Halifax. But, besides these places, he also preached at Preston, from Revelation xxii. 17;

1790 Age 87 and was the guest of Mrs. Emmett of Walton,[1] where he wrote the following letter to the celebrated Ann Cutler, commonly called "praying Nanny."

"WALTON, *April* 15, 1790.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—There is something in the dealings of God with your soul, which is out of the common way. But I have known several whom He has been pleased to lead in exactly the same way, and particularly in manifesting to them distinctly the three Persons of the ever blessed Trinity. You may tell all your experience to me any time; but will need to be cautious in speaking to others, for they would not understand what you say. Go on in the name of God, and in the power of His might. Pray for the whole spirit of humility; and I wish that you would write and speak without reserve to, dear Nanny,

"Yours affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Wesley spent April 21 at Halifax;[3] and, in connection with his visit here, preached at Bradshaw, where, on his tottering up the pulpit stairs, the whole congregation burst into a flood of tears. More than once, his memory failed him, and Joseph Bradford and William Thompson had to act the part of remembrancers. The visit was memorable in more respects than one. While the congregation was waiting for the venerable preacher, and a crowd was assembled at the door, a woman of the name of Wilson mockingly exclaimed, "They are waiting for their God"; no sooner was the sentence uttered than she fell senseless to the ground, and, the day following, she expired.[4]

The next few days, according to Wesley's plan, were employed at Huddersfield, Dewsbury, Wakefield, Birstal, Leeds, Bradford, and Otley. On the 3rd of May, he came to York. Thomas Taylor, in his unpublished diary, remarks: "May 3—I went to York, and was amazed to meet such a number of travelling preachers, fifteen or sixteen of them. Mr. Wesley preached a useful sermon; and, after preaching, we had a meeting respecting one of our number who was accused of drunkenness."

On the 5th of May, Wesley was met at Darlington by his

[1] "Methodism in Preston," p. 44. [2] Cutler's Life, p. 5.
[3] *Methodist Magazine*, 1792, p. 66.
[4] "Methodism in Halifax," p. 181.

son in law, Mr. William Smith, and by Charles Atmore, from Newcastle. Atmore writes: "We heard him preach in the evening, from 'He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.' He appears very feeble; and no wonder, he being nearly eighty-seven years of age. His sight has failed so much, that he cannot see to give out the hymn; yet his voice is strong, and his spirits remarkably lively. Surely this great and good man is the prodigy of the present age." 1790 Age 87

Old as he was, Wesley set out next morning, at half-past three o'clock, for Newcastle, where he preached, in the evening, from Isaiah lvii. 1, 2. The following night (Friday) he preached again his remarkable sermon to the children of the Sunday-school, taking as his text Psalm xxxiv. 11; the sermon being literally composed and delivered in words of not more than two syllables.[1] On Saturday, May 8, we find him at North Shields, preaching, says Atmore, "an excellent sermon, from 'What things were gain to me, these I counted loss for Christ.'" Next day, Sunday, May 9, he addressed a crowd of several thousands, on Byker Hill, from Matthew vii. 24; and, in the evening, at the Orphan House, took his old favourite text, "By grace are ye saved, through faith." "The house," writes Atmore, "was much crowded, and many hundreds returned, not being able to obtain an entrance." Atmore continues:

"He was highly honoured in his ministry; particularly to one who had been in a state of great despair for many years. As soon as he arrived at the Orphan House, Mr. Wesley inquired after this individual, and I accompanied him in visiting him. As soon as he entered the room, where the poor man was, he went up to him, and said, 'Brother Reed, I have a word from God unto thee; Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.' He then knelt down to pray; and such a season I have seldom experienced. Hope instantly sprang up, and despair gave place; and, although Reed had not been out of his habitation, nor even from his wretched bed, for several years, he went that evening to hear Mr. Wesley preach; and God graciously confirmed the testimony of His servant in restoring him to 'the light of His countenance.'"[2]

On Monday, May 10, Wesley proceeded on his journey to Scotland. Of his labours during the next fortnight, we have no record; but, on May 25, we find him preaching to a

[1] See page 472 of this volume.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 121.

1790 crowded audience at Aberdeen; then at Brechin, Glasgow,
Age 87 and Dumfries. The last mentioned town was now a part of the Glasgow circuit, and had, as its resident preacher, Mr. Yewdall, who writes: "In the latter end of May, Mr. Wesley visited us. He came from Glasgow that day, (about seventy miles,) but his strength was almost exhausted, and, when he attempted to preach, very few could hear him. His sight was likwise much decayed, so that he could neither read the hymn or text. The wheels of life were ready to stand still; but his conversation was agreeably edifying, being mixed with the wisdom and gravity of a parent, and the artless simplicity of a child."[1]

From Dumfries, Wesley proceeded, on June 2, to Carlisle, where the chapel would not near contain his congregation. Thence he went to Hexham, where he "found a loving people, much alive to God, and consequently increasing daily."

On Friday, June 4, he once again, and, for the last time, reached Newcastle. He writes:

"In this and Kingswood house, were I to do my own will, I should choose to spend the short remainder of my days. 'But it cannot be; this is not my rest. This and the next evening, we had a numerous congregation; and the people seemed much alive. Sunday, June 6, I was invited to preach in Lemsley church, on the side of Gateshead Fell; but, some hours after, the minister changed his mind. So I preached in our own preaching house, which contained the greater part of the congregation; among whom were Sir Henry Liddell and his lady, with a great number of his servants. The chapel was hot as a stove; but neither high nor low seemed to regard it: for God was there! The Orphan House was equally crowded in the evening; but the rain would not suffer me to preach abroad. Monday, June 7, I transcribed the stations of the preachers. Tuesday, June 8, I wrote a form for settling the preaching houses, without any superfluous words, which shall be used for the time to come, verbatim, for all the houses to which I contribute anything. I will no more encourage that villainous tautology of lawyers, which is the scandal of our nation. In the evening, I preached to the children of our Sunday-school; six or seven hundred of whom were present. Observe, none of our masters or mistresses teach for pay: they seek a reward that man cannot give."

Two days after this, Wesley left Newcastle, where he had

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1795, p. 423.

spent so many happy hours, for ever. Before we follow him, three more of his letters may be acceptable; the first to Henry Moore, the second to the wife of Adam Clarke, the third to Miss Bisson. 1790 Age 87

"DUMFRIES, *June* 1, 1790.

"MY DEAR HENRY,—So I am upon the borders of England once again. My sight is much as it was, but I doubt I shall not recover my strength, till I use that noble medicine, preaching in the morning. But where can we put poor Adam Clarke? He must not preach himself to death. What circuit is he equal to? Where can he have rest as well as labour? The best place I can think of, at present, is Leeds.

"The dying words of the Prince of Orange are much upon my mind this morning: 'Lord have mercy upon the people!' I never saw so much likelihood of doing good in Scotland as there is now, if all our preachers here would be Methodists indeed! Tell dear Nancy to love me as well as she can.

"I am, my dear Henry, etc.,

"J. WESLEY."[1]

"DUMFRIES, *June* 1, 1790.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—The great question is, What can be done for Adam Clarke? Now, will you save his life? Look round; consider if there be any circuit where he can have much rest, and little work; or shall he and you spend September in my rooms at Kingswood, on condition that he shall preach but twice a week, and ride to the Hotwells every day? I think he must do this, or die; and I do not want him (neither do you) to run away from us in haste. You need not be told, that this will be attended with some expense; if it be, we can make it easy. I am apt to think this will be the best way. In the meantime, let him do as much as he can, and no more.

"It is probable, I shall stay with you a little longer, as my strength does not much decline. I travelled yesterday nearly eighty miles, and preached in the evening without any pain. The Lord does what pleases Him. Peace be with all your spirits!

"I am, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

"NEWCASTLE, *June* 6, 1790.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—To hear from you is always a pleasure to me; though it is a pleasure mixed with concern when I hear of your weakness or sickness; only I know the Lord loveth whom He chasteneth. But of what kind is your illness? Perhaps I might be enabled to tell you how to remove it; and if you can recover your health, you ought; for health is a great blessing.

[1] Moore's Life, p. 89.
[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 94.

1790 Age 87

"In August last, my strength failed almost at once; and my sight, in a great measure, went from me. But all is well; I can still write almost as easily as ever; and I can read in a clear light; and, I think, if I could not read or write at all, I could still say something for God. When you have more strength, tell me more of the work of God, whether in yourself or those round about you. And ought you not to let me know if you are in any temporal distress? For everything that concerns you, concerns, my dear Jenny, yours most affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

On leaving Newcastle, on the 10th of June, Wesley proceeded, over rough roads and high hills, a distance of at least thirty miles, to Weardale, where he preached both at noon and night. On the 11th, he preached twice in the open air, at Stanhope and at Durham, the crowds being so immense that the chapels were utterly unable to contain them. The 12th and 13th he spent at Sunderland, where he preached thrice: once in the Methodist chapel; a second time in Monkwearmouth church, for the benefit of the Sunday-school; and a third, to many thousands of people, out of doors.

During the ensuing week, we find him preaching at Hartlepool, Stockton, Yarm, Potto, Hutton Rudby, Stokesley, and Whitby. At the last mentioned town, he spent Sunday, June 20, preached twice, attended church, and wrote in his journal: "It was very providential, that part of the adjoining mountain fell down, and demolished our old meeting-house, with many houses besides; by which means we have one of the most beautiful chapels in Great Britain, finely situated on the steep side of the mountain. In all England, I have not seen a more affectionate people than those at Whitby."

This was high praise of these Yorkshire fishermen; but it was not unmerited. Warm hearts often beat under rough exteriors. Besides, the Methodist society at Whitby was now well-nigh a model. Most of the two hundred and fifty members met in *band*. Their itinerant preachers preached to them three mornings every week; and, on the other mornings, they were either supplied with local preachers, or held prayer-meetings. At noon, every Friday, they had their

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 105.

intercession meeting; and, after the toils of the week were ended, they met together every Saturday night, to ask God to fit their minds and hearts for the services of Sunday.[1] 1790 Age 87

On June 21, Wesley preached at Pickering and Malton; and, on the following days, at Scarborough, Bridlington, Beverley, and Hull. At Hull, he spent Sunday, June 27, and also his birthday. He writes:

"Friday, June 25—About noon I preached at Beverley, to a serious, well behaved congregation; and, in the evening, to one equally serious, and far more numerous, at Hull. Saturday, 26, was a day of satisfaction. I preached at seven in the morning, and at six in the evening, to as many as our house would contain; the ground being too wet for the congregation to stand abroad."

This is a simple entry, and gives no idea of the commotion created by Wesley's visit. Thomas Taylor, who was now the assistant in the Hull circuit, writes in his diary: "I and many friends from Hull met Mr. Wesley at Beverley. We dined at an inn. He preached, and we hastened to Hull. Many people attending this evening." Taylor is as laconic as Wesley; but, from another source, we learn, that the "many friends from Hull" were a regular cavalcade of forty persons, some in chaises, and the rest on horses. All these dined with Wesley at his inn at Beverley; spirits were lively, and conversation brisk; but, in the midst of it, and while all present were utterly oblivious of the flight of time, Wesley pulled out his watch, started on his feet, bid his friends good day, stepped into his carriage, and was gone before they had time to remonstrate, or to wish him to wait for the cavalcade to attend him. Horses were saddled, and carriages got ready with as much celerity as possible; but the old man was on his way, and it was with the utmost difficulty that "the horsemen and the chariots" overtook the illustrious visitor in sufficient time to do him honour in the sight of their fellow citizens.[2]

On his birthday, he wrote:

"Monday, June 28.—This day, I enter into my eighty-eighth year. For above eighty-six years, I found none of the infirmities of old age; my eyes did not wax dim, neither was my natural strength abated; but, last

[1] Kilham's Life, by Blackwell, p. 114.
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1836, p. 494.

1790 Age 87 August, I found almost a sudden change. My eyes were so dim, that no glasses would help me. My strength likewise now quite forsook me; and probably will not return in this world. But I feel no pain from head to foot; only it seems nature is exhausted; and, humanly speaking, will sink more and more, till 'the weary springs of life stand still at last.'"

Thus did the venerable man calmly contemplate the inevitable closing of his remarkable career. No weary child of innocence ever went to its welcome couch with greater serenity than Wesley went down the steps leading to his sepulchre.

Here we pause again, to insert another selection of his letters. The first was addressed to William Black, in Nova Scotia.

"SUNDERLAND, *June* 14, 1790.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—You did well to send me an account of your little societies. Here is a good beginning, though it is, as yet, in many places, a day of small things; and although it does not please God to carry on His work so rapidly with you as in the United States. But one soul is worth all the merchandise in the world; and, whoever gets money, do you win souls.

"Never was there, throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland, so great a thirst for the pure word of God as there is at this day. The same we find in the little islands of Man, Wight, Jersey, Guernsey, and Alderney in the Western Ocean. In the Isle of Man alone (thirty miles long) the societies contain about four-and-twenty hundred members. I have just now finished my route through Scotland, where I never had such congregations before. So it pleases God to give me a little more to do, before He calls me hence.

"What has become of brother Scurr, Dodson, and our other Yorkshire friends? Some of them doubtless are gone into a farther country; but some I suppose remain. I doubt you do not keep up a constant intercourse with each other. Love as brethren!

"I am, dear William, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

The following, kindly lent by Charles Reed, Esq., M.P., has not before been published. It was addressed to William Thom, the assistant appointed to Sarum circuit.

"MALTON, *June* 21, 1790.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I concur in the judgment of my brother, that the using of the form of prayer will tend to unite our people to the Church, rather than to separate them from it; especially if you earnestly insist on their going to church every fourth Sunday.

[1] Black's Memoirs, p. 265.

"I am very indifferent concerning the preaching house, and shall not concern myself about it any more. 'I have lost £10 by it already, although to no purpose. If anything more is done concerning it, it must be done by the people at Sarum themselves. 1790 Age 87

"I am, with love to sister Thom, dear Billy, your affectionate friend and brother, "J. WESLEY."

The next was addressed to a bishop, whose name is not given.

"HULL, *June* 26, 1790.

"MY LORD,—It may seem strange, that one, who is not acquainted with your lordship, should trouble you with a letter. But I am constrained to do it; I believe it is my duty both to God and your lordship. And I must speak plain; having nothing to hope or fear in this world, which I am on the point of leaving.

"The Methodists, in general, my lord, are members of the Church of England. They hold all her doctrines, attend her service, and partake of her sacraments. They do not willingly do harm to any one, but do what good they can to all. To encourage each other herein, they frequently spend an hour together in prayer and mutual exhortation. Permit me then to ask, '*Cui bono?* for what reasonable end, would your lordship drive these people out of the Church?' Are they not as quiet, as inoffensive, nay, as pious, as any of their neighbours? except perhaps here and there a hairbrained man, who knows not what he is about. Do you ask, 'Who drives them out of the Church?' Your lordship does; and that in the most cruel manner; yea, and the most disingenuous manner. They desire a licence to worship God after their own conscience. Your lordship refuses it; and then punishes them for not having a licence! So your lordship leaves them only this alternative, 'Leave the Church or starve.' And is it a Christian, yea, a protestant bishop, that so persecutes his own flock? I say *persecutes;* for it is persecution, to all intents and purposes. You do not burn them, indeed, but you starve them; and how small is the difference! And your lordship does this, under colour of a vile, execrable law, not a whit better than that *de hæretico comburendo!* So persecution, which is banished out of France, is again countenanced in England!

"O my lord, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, for pity's sake, suffer the poor people to enjoy their religious, as well as civil liberty! I am on the brink of eternity! Perhaps so is your lordship too! How soon may you also be called, to give an account of your stewardship, to the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls! May He enable both you and me to do it with joy! So prays, my lord, your lordship's dutiful son and servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

The following letter is without date, but is too characteristic to be omitted.

[1] Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 384.

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"You give five reasons why the Rev. Mr. P—— will come no more among us. 1. Because we despise the ministers of the Church of England. This I flatly deny: I am answering letters, this very post, which bitterly blame me for just the contrary. 2. Because so much backbiting and evil speaking is suffered amongst our people. It is not suffered; all possible means are used, both to prevent and remove it. 3. Because I, who have written so much against hoarding up money, have put out £700 to interest. I never put sixpence out to interest since I was born; nor had I ever £100 together, my own, since I came into the world. 4. Because our lay preachers have told many stories of my brother and me. If they did, I am sorry for them; when I hear the particulars, I can answer, and, perhaps, make those ashamed who believed them. 5. Because we did not help a friend in distress. We did help him as far as we were able. 'But we might have made his case known to Mr. G., Lady H., etc.' So we did, more than once; but we could not pull money from them, whether they would or no. Therefore, these reasons are of no weight. You conclude with praying, that God would remove pride and malice from amongst us. Of pride, I have too much; of malice, I have none; however, the prayer is good, and I thank you for it."[1]

The next was addressed to Adam Clarke, then at Bristol.

"*June* 28, 1790.

"DEAR ADAM,—I often wonder at the people of Bristol. They are so honest, yet so dull, 'tis scarce possible to strike any fire into them. Only with God all things are possible. Many years ago, I put the society at Bath into a way wherein, if they had persevered, they would now have owed nothing. They were at Plymouth but thirty in number, and their debt was £1400. I advised them, let every member subscribe monthly what he can; and a hundred at the Dock promised to do the same. 'I,' said one, 'will give a crown a month'; 'I,' said another, 'half-a-crown.' Many subscribed a shilling, sixpence, or threepence a month. And now the debt is paid. I began such a subscription in Bath; as I have done in many places with success. But they left it off in two or three weeks. Why? Because I gave four guineas to prevent one, that was arrested, from going to jail! Good reason, was it not? 'Why,' said one and another, 'might he not have given it to *me*?'

"On Monday four weeks, I shall probably set out for Bristol. Peace be with your spirits.

"I am, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

While on money matters, let an explanation be given. Wesley asserts, in one of the foregoing letters, that he never had, at one time, since he was born, £100 that was his own.

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 139.
[2] Dunn's Life of Clarke, p. 73.

No doubt, excepting an occasional legacy, this was strictly true; and yet, towards the close of life, a year never passed without his giving hundreds of pounds away in charity. Wesley not only kept a journal of his labours, but account books of his income and expenditure. The last of these has, at the end of it, the following entry, in Wesley's own handwriting, but in penmanship which it is extremely difficult to decipher: 1790 Age 87

"N.B. For upwards of eighty-six years,[1] I have kept my accounts exactly. I will not attempt it any longer, being satisfied with the continual conviction, that I save all I can, and give all I can, that is, all I have.

"JOHN WESLEY,

"*July* 16, 1790."

What was Wesley's income? He had £30 a year from the London circuit;[2] and, in the country, the Methodists occasionally, but not often, paid his hostelry bill, and other similar expenses incurred in travelling. But this was not all. Wesley was the proprietor of a large publishing and book concern, from which he derived considerable profits; but be the profits what they might, they were at once distributed in the work of God, and in acts of charity. In as brief a form as possible, we give, from the book above mentioned, a few items belonging to the last nine years of Wesley's life.

In 1782, Wesley received £361 19*s.* Of this, he spent £5 19*s.* for clothes. The balance, £356, he, with his own hands, gave away; and, during the same year, John Atlay, his book steward, by his directions, gave a further sum of £237 13*s.*; making £593 13*s.* for the year.

In 1783, he, and his steward by his orders, gave £832 1*s.* 6*d.* In 1784, £534 17*s.* 6*d.* In 1785, £851 12*s.* In 1786, £738 5*s.* In 1787, including his travelling expenses, £961 4*s.* In 1788, the last year Atlay acted for him, the two united gave in charity £738 4*s.*

At the end of his accounts for 1789, he writes:

[1] Ought it not to be sixty-eight?

[2] An error occurred in the first edition of this volume, on page 224. It was there stated, that Wesley received £60 a year; it ought to have been £30. According to the old circuit book, at City Road, it was the custom to pay him £15 in the first quarter of each year, and £15 in the last.

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"I have given this year by myself	£206 0 0
By George Whitfield[1]	560 0 0
Travelling	60 0 0

"But I can be accurate no[2] . . 'Not as *I* will, but as Thou wilt.'"

No one can dispute that the profits of Wesley's book establishment were as much his own property as the profits of any of the great publishing houses in Paternoster Row; but, of these profits, he literally spent none upon himself, except for an occasional suit of clothes. All were most scrupulously given, as fast as they were realised, and sometimes faster, to the support and extension of the great work to which his long life was cheerfully devoted, and to the relief of the distresses of his fellow creatures as far as he had the power. Dr. Whitehead says, it was supposed that, in the course of fifty years, Wesley gave away between twenty and thirty thousand pounds. Henry Moore writes: "Mr. Wesley's accounts lie before me, and his expenses are noted with the greatest exactness. Every penny is recorded; and, I am persuaded, the supposed £30,000 might be increased several thousands more."[3]

Wesley made a will, in which he bequeathed his book business, and his books then on sale, (subject to a rent charge of £85 a year to the widow and children of his brother,) to the Methodist conference, in trust "for carrying on the work of God, by itinerant preachers"; his furniture, books, and whatever else belonged to him at Kingswood, to Coke, Mather, and Moore, "in trust, to be still employed in teaching and maintaining the children of poor travelling preachers"; all the books which belonged to him in his studies at London and other places, to Coke, Whitehead, and Moore, "in trust, for the use of the preachers who shall labour there from time to time"; all his manuscripts to the same Coke, Whitehead, and Moore, "to be burned, or

[1] Now his steward. [2] The sentence is unfinished.

[3] Samuel Bradburn remarks: "I know that, from the conference of 1780 to the conference of 1781, he gave away, in *private charities*, above £1400. He told me himself, in 1787, that he never gave away, out of his own pocket, less than £1000 a year." Bradburn adds: "He never relieved poor people in the street, but he either took off, or removed, his hat to them, when they thanked him."

published, as they saw good"; his gowns, cassocks, sashes, and bands in City Road chapel, "for the use of the clergymen attending there"; his "pelisse to the Rev. Mr. Creighton"; all the rest of his "wearing apparel to four of the travelling preachers that wanted it most"; his watch to Joseph Bradford; his gold seal to Elizabeth Ritchie; his chaise and horses to James Ward and Charles Wheeler, "in trust, to be sold, and the money to be divided, one half to Hannah Abbott, and the other to the members of the select society"; and copies of the eight volumes of his sermons to "each travelling preacher who should remain in the connexion six months after his decease." 1790 Age 87

All this was property, but not money. Hitherto, not a *coin* has been bequeathed; but still there are six clauses in Wesley's will, which may be designated *monetary*. We give them in substance, though the first two seem to contradict each other. (1) All the coins, and whatever else was found in the drawer of his bureau at London, to his granddaughters, Mary and Jane Smith. (2) Whatever money remained in his bureau and pockets, to Thomas Briscoe, William Collins, John Easton, and Isaac Brown. (3) Out of the first money arising from the sale of books, £40 to his sister Martha, £40 to Mr. Creighton, and £60 to the Rev. Mr. Heath. (4) The annuity of £5, left by Roger Shiel to Kingswood school, to be paid to Henry Brooke, Arthur Keene, and William Whitestone. (5) A pound each to the six poor men who should carry his body to the grave. (6) Any personal estate, undisposed of, to be given to his two nieces, E. Ellison, S. Collet, equally.

The reader has here the substance of Wesley's will. Where were his hoardings, his money put out to interest, his landed, household, and chapel property? He had none. He died, as he had lived, without a purse. He had been his own executor as far as possible; and now had nothing to bequeath, except what, in his lifetime, could not easily be turned into current coin.

We return to his itinerary. Leaving Hull, Wesley proceeded to Lincolnshire. On June 29, the crowd at Owston was such that he had to preach in the open air. At Lincoln, his text was, "One thing is needful." "Is this the great Mr.

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Wesley?" exclaimed a lady when retiring: "why, the poorest person in the chapel might understand him." "Yes," replied a gentleman; "in this he displays his greatness, that while the most ignorant can understand him, the most learned are edified, and can take no offence."[1] On Friday, July 2, he preached twice, once out of doors at Newton, and a second time in the chapel at Gainsborough. On Saturday, he preached at Epworth, and met the society. On Sunday, July 4, he attended his father's church, where the congregation was five times, and the attendance at sacrament ten times, larger than usual. Besides this, he preached at Misterton, to a great multitude, "under a spreading tree"; and, in Epworth market place, to "such a congregation as was never seen at Epworth before."

Here occurs an eight weeks' hiatus in Wesley's journal. The space between July 4 and August 27 we shall fill up in the best way we can.

At Doncaster, where he had a crowded congregation, a burly butcher, noted for his popery, his wickedness, and his pugilistic feats, was converted, became a Methodist, and, to his dying day, continued a peaceful, humble, loving Christian.[2] This was probably on July 5, as, on the day following, he was at Rotherham.[3] There can be no question, that Sheffield also would be visited; and, most likely, Derby and Nottingham; also perhaps Castle Donington, Leicester, Coventry, and other places. At all events, the Castle Donington old stewards' book contains this item: "1790. Paid for Mr. Wesley's carriage through the circuit, £1 6*s*."[4]

We cannot trace him farther; but, three weeks after he was at Doncaster and Rotherham, he opened his conference at Bristol,—the last that he attended. Charles Atmore writes: "Mr. Wesley appeared very feeble; his eyesight had failed so much that he could not see to give out the hymns; yet his voice was strong, his spirit remarkably lively, and the powers of his mind, and his love towards his fellow creatures, were as bright and as ardent as ever."[5]

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[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1825, p. 25.
[2] Ibid. 1828, p. 741; and *Christian Miscellany*, 1847, p. 173.
[3] *Methodist Magazine*, 1792, p. 288. [4] Ibid. 1856, p. 234. [5] Ibid. 1845, p. 123.

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The only legislation at this conference was concerning preachers and preaching houses.

In reference to the latter, it was determined: (1) That, in future, all chapels should be built on the same plan as those in Bath and in City Road. (2) No chapel should be undertaken without the consent of a majority of the connexional building committee. (3) Not a stone was to be laid, till the chapel was settled after the Methodist form, verbatim; nor until two thirds of the estimated expense were subscribed; and no collections were to be made for any chapel except in the circuit where it was to be erected.

Then in reference to preachers: (1) None, in future, were to attend conference, except those whose travelling expenses were paid by the circuits in which they respectively laboured. Those in Scotland and Wales were to be the only exceptions. (2) The assistants were to tell the people, that every circuit must bear its own burden, and that those circuits which "did not provide for their preachers and their children, (except Scotland, Ireland, and Wales,) should have no more preachers sent to them, for the time to come, than they would provide for." (3) No assistant was to take into society any one put out by his predecessor, without consulting him. (4) Preachers were never to hasten home to their families, after evening preaching, till they had met the society. (5) No preacher was to leave conference before the conclusion of it, without consent publicly obtained. (6) No preacher was to preach three times the same day to the same congregation; or oftener than twice on a week day, or thrice on Sundays.

In reference to the last of these regulations, Adam Clarke relates that Wesley was outwitted. In a private meeting with some of his principal and senior preachers, Wesley proposed that no preacher should preach thrice on the same day. Messrs. Mather, Pawson, Thompson, and others objected. Wesley replied: "It must be given up; we shall lose our preachers by such excessive labour." They answered: "We have all done so; and you, even at a very advanced age, have continued to do so." "What I have done," said he, "is out of the question: my life and strength have been under an especial providence; besides, I know better than they how to preach without injuring myself; and no man can preach thrice

1790 Age 87 a day without killing himself sooner or later; and the custom shall not be continued." The objectors pressed the point no further, finding that he was determined; but deceived him after all, by altering the minute thus, when it was sent to press: "No preacher shall preach three times the same day, *to the same congregation.*"

This was not ingenuous. Wesley was right; and Methodism has paid an incalculable penalty by disregarding his almost dying wish. Clarke justly remarks:

"He who preaches the gospel, as he ought, must do it with his whole strength of body and soul; and he who undertakes a labour of this kind thrice every Lord's day will infallibly shorten his life by it. He who, instead of *preaching*, *talks* to the people,—merely *speaks* about good things, or *tells* a religious story,—will never injure himself by such an employment: but such a person does not *labour* in the word and doctrine; he tells his tale; and, as he preaches, so his congregation believes; and sinners are left as he found them."[1]

During the last decade of years in Wesley's life, Methodism had made amazing progress. In 1780, there were 64 circuits in the United Kingdom; now there were 115. Then there were 171 itinerant preachers employed; now there were 294. Then there were 43,380 members of society; now there were 71,568. Then there were no missionary stations; now 19 missionaries were appointed to Antigua, Barbadoes, St. Vincent's, St. Christopher's, Nevis, Tortola, Jamaica, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, which had an aggregate membership of 5350 persons,—800 in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, and 4550 in the West Indies. In 1780, there were in America twenty circuits, 42 itinerant preachers, and 8504 members of society. In 1790, there were 114 circuits, 228 itinerant preachers, and 57,631 members of society.

These statistics, put into another form, will stand thus.

	Methodist Circuits throughout the world.	Methodist Itinerant Preachers.	Methodist Members.
1790	240	541	134,549
1780	84	213	52,334
INCREASE in 10 years.	156	328	82,215

[1] Clarke's Life, vol. i., p. 277.

Marvellous had been the success of Methodism up to the year 1780; and, yet, the results during the last ten years of Wesley's life were much more than double the united results of the forty years preceding! 1790 Age 87

Before leaving the conference of 1790, we insert an unpublished letter, addressed by Miss Ritchie to the wife of one of Wesley's clerical assistants, the Rev. Peard Dickenson.

"*August* 3, 1790.

". . . I felt much for our Zion previous to the conference. Our dear and honoured father's state of health was alarming; but prayer was heard, and he is much better, and things have such an appearance as revives my hope that we shall still go on in the good old way.

"Mr. Wesley has very openly and fully declared his sentiments respecting the impropriety of a separation from the Church; and the preachers, in general, have agreed to abide by the old plan. I sincerely pity Dr. Coke; but I really believe good will be brought out of evil.

"The preachers have had a most searching conference, and the Lord has been very present. The preachers' dress has been largely debated, and what is verging towards worldly conformity is to be laid aside. We all lament dress as a growing evil among the Methodists; and, if the preachers are not patterns in this respect, how can they exhort the people? One morning, at breakfast, among a very few select friends, Mr. Wesley said he had some things to complain of, which he had better mention before half-a-dozen persons than before a hundred. Among other things, he spoke with disapprobation of the ruffles on Mr. Dickenson's shirts. I endeavoured to soften matters, saying, that you desired to take them off, and that, if this was not already done, it was because you had been prevented; on which I was requested to mention to you the conversation which had taken place. My dear sister, let me beg of you then, never to let Mr. Dickenson wear a ruffled shirt again. You both love our dear father too well to grieve him. Yours in Jesus,

"ELIZABETH RITCHIE."

As soon as the Bristol conference was ended, the veteran evangelist again set out on his glorious mission, and spent the next three weeks in Wales. At Brecon, he preached in the town hall; and in Watton chapel, on the state of the church at Ephesus, and our Lord's lamentation over Jerusalem.[1] At Haverfordwest, he wrote as follows, to Thomas Roberts, then a young preacher, of four years' standing, whom he had just appointed to the Bristol circuit.

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1847, p. 211.

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"HAVERFORDWEST, *August* 13, 1790.

"DEAR TOMMY,—Now I shall make a trial of you, whether I can confide in you or no. Since I came hither, I have been much concerned. This is the most important circuit in all Wales; but it has been vilely neglected by the assistant, whom, therefore, I can trust no more. I can trust you, even in so critical a case. I desire, therefore, that, whoever opposes, you will set out immediately, and come hither as soon as ever you can. I wish you could meet me at Cardiff, or Cowbridge. You will see, by the printed plan, when I shall be at either of those places. If you have not notice enough to do this, meet me to-morrow sennight at the New Passage, unless you can get a passage by the weekly boat to Swansea. If it be possible, do not fail. It may be, this may be the beginning of a lasting friendship between you and, dear Tommy, yours, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

At Pembroke, Wesley wrote the following to Mr. William Mears, a useful local preacher, at Rochester.

"PEMBROKE, *August* 16, 1790.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—It is my desire that all things be done to the satisfaction of all parties. If, therefore, it be more convenient, let brother Pritchard's[2] family be at Canterbury, and sister Boone[3] lodge in Chatham house.

"Why do you not again set on foot a weekly subscription in order to lessen your debt? Have neither the preachers nor the people any spirit in them? Who begins? I will give half-a-crown a week for a year, if all of you will make it up twenty shillings.

"I am, dear Billy, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[4]

In a letter to his niece, Miss Sarah Wesley, dated "Near Cowbridge, August 18, 1790," he writes: "I always reprove profane sailors, or, what is worse, profane gentlemen; and many of them will receive it civilly, if not thankfully. They all know, captains as well as common men, that swearing is not necessary. And, even now, we have captains of several men-of-war who do not swear at all; and never were men better obeyed."[5]

Thus was Wesley always about his heavenly Father's work. On August 27, he returned to Bristol, in the neighbourhood of which he was busily employed till September 27.

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[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1837, p. 11.
[2] The assistant in Chatham circuit.
[3] The wife of Charles Boone, the assistant in Canterbury circuit.
[4] *Local Preachers' Magazine*, 1851, p. 75.
[5] *Methodist Magazine*, 1847, p. 656.

In the morning of Sunday, August 29, he read prayers, preached, and administered the Lord's supper, a service in which, without assistance, he was occupied for three full hours; and, yet, in the afternoon, he preached again, out of doors. The next day, we find him preaching twice, at Castle Carey, and Ditcheat. 1790 Age 87

On Tuesday 31, he was visited by a *lusus naturæ*, William Kingston, born without arms, who, in Wesley's presence, took his teacup between his toes, and the toast with his other foot; and afterwards, by another feat, showed himself to be a man of no mean penmanship. On the same day, Wesley had "a lovely congregation at Shepton Mallet," and a crowded one at Pensford.

During the remainder of the week, he preached at Bristol, and corrected and abridged the Life of Mrs. Scudamore.

On Saturday, September 4, he went to Bath and preached; and on Sunday, the 5th, writes: "At ten we had a numerous congregation, and more communicants than ever I saw here before. This day, I cut off that vile custom, I know not when or how it began, of preaching three times a day by the same preacher to the same congregation; enough to weary out both the bodies and minds of the speaker, as well as his hearers." On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, in the ensuing week, he preached once daily, and on Friday twice.

On Sunday, September 12, he employed himself in Bristol, and, during the week following, met the classes, containing 944 members, and likewise preached at Thornbury, and at Kingswood.

In labour like this the whole month was spent.

At the preceding conference, Wesley had appointed Adam Clarke to the Dublin circuit, and, on September 5, Adam wrote him a long letter, telling him that Thomas Rutherford had been laid aside by rheumatic fever, and that the results of a religious revival had been destroyed by the extravagant irregularities of those who conducted the prayer-meetings during Mr. Rutherford's illness. These meetings had been, and still were, kept up till ten or eleven o'clock on Sunday nights, and sometimes till twelve and one; and it was no uncommon thing for a person, in the midst of them, to give an exhortation of half or three quarters of an hour's continu-

1790 Age 87 ance. Clarke wished to correct these irregularities, and wrote to Wesley for advice,[1] who replied to him as follows.

"BRISTOL, *September* 9, 1790.

"DEAR ADAM,—Did not the terrible weather that you had at sea make you forget your fatigue by land? Come, set one against the other, and you have no great reason to complain of your journey.

"You will have need of all the courage and prudence God has given you. Indeed, you will want constant supplies of both. Very gently, and very steadily, you should proceed between the rocks on either hand. In the great revival at London, my first difficulty was, to bring into temper those who opposed the work; and my next, to check and regulate the extravagances of those that promoted it. And this was far the hardest part of the work; for many of them would bear no check at all. But I followed one rule, though with all calmness: 'You must either bend or break.' Meantime, while you act exactly right, expect to be blamed by both sides. I will give you a few directions. (1) See that no prayer-meeting continue later than nine at night, particularly on Sunday: let the house be emptied before the clock strikes nine. (2) Let there be no exhortation at any prayer-meeting. (3) Beware of jealousy, or judging one another. (4) Never think a man is an enemy to the work, because he reproves irregularities. Peace be with you and yours!

"I am, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Clarke acted upon Wesley's good advice, and wrote him the results. Wesley answered.

"BEDFORD, *October* 28, 1790.

"DEAR ADAM,—I am glad my letter had so good an effect. I dearly love our precious society in Dublin, and cannot but be keenly sensible of anything that gives them disturbance. I am glad our leaders have adopted that excellent method of regularly changing their classes. Wherever this has been done, it has been a means of quickening both the leaders and the people. I wish this custom could be more extensively introduced.

"You did well to prevent all irregular and turbulent prayer-meetings, and, at all hazards, to keep the meetings of the society private.

"Poor Mr. Smyth is now used just as he used *me*. He must either bend or break. Although you cannot solicit any of Bethesda to join with us, yet neither can you refuse them when they offer their hand.

"You do well to offer all possible courtesy to Mr. William Smyth and his family.

"As long as the society in Dublin continues upward of a thousand, you will have no reason to complain.

"I am, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[3]

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[1] *Wesleyan Times*, June 11, 1866. [2] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 98.
[3] *Wesleyan Times*, June 11, 1866.

Before returning to Wesley's journal, another letter may be welcome. It was addressed to Mr. Robert C. Brackenbury. Wesley's reference to himself is touching; and his remarks on the doctrine of Christian perfection ought to be remembered. 1790 Age 87

"BRISTOL, *September* 15, 1790.

"DEAR SIR,—I am glad to find you are in better bodily health, and not weary and faint in your mind. My body seems nearly to have done its work, and to be almost worn out. Last month, my strength was nearly gone, and I could have sat almost still from morning to night. But, blessed be God, I crept about a little, and made shift to preach once a day. On Monday, I ventured a little further; and, after I had preached three times (once in the open air), I found my strength so restored, that I could have preached again without inconvenience.

"I am glad brother D—— has more light with regard to full sanctification. This doctrine is the grand *depositum* which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and, for the sake of propagating this chiefly, He appeared to have raised them up.

"I congratulate you upon sitting loose to all below; stedfast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free. Moderate riding on horseback, chiefly in the south of England, would improve your health. If you choose to accompany me, in any of my little journeys on this side Christmas, whenever you were tired you might go into my carriage. I am not so ready a writer as I was once; but, I bless God, I can scrawl a little,—enough to assure you that,

"I am, dear sir, your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

On Monday, September 27, Wesley set out from Bristol to London, and preached at Devizes and Salisbury. On Wednesday we find him preaching at Winchester and Portsmouth; and on Thursday and Friday at Newport, in the Isle of Wight.

On Saturday, October 2, he left Portsmouth, at two o'clock in the morning; and, at Cobham, twenty miles from London, was met by James and Hester Ann Rogers, and six other friends, in carriages, to welcome him.[2] Mr. Rogers writes: "He arrived in good health and spirits. We all dined at Cobham, and, about six in the evening, reached London, where we praised the Lord with joyful hearts."[3]

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 8.

[2] This was done with the approbation of the London stewards, who paid £1 19*s.* for the carriages and expenses. (City Road society book.)

[3] Life of James Rogers, p. 44.

1790 Age 87 The next day, Sunday, October 3, he preached twice in the City Road chapel, and held a lovefeast. Rogers says:

"Many souls were greatly comforted. Indeed, his preaching, during the whole winter, was attended with uncommon unction; and he frequently spoke, both in his sermons and exhortations, as if each time were to be his last; and often desired the people to receive what he advanced as his dying charge. His conversation also, in his family, seemed to indicate a presentiment of death. He frequently spoke of the state of separate spirits, and their particular employments; and, for the last three months of his life, there were scarcely three evenings passed together, but he gave out and sung, in the family, the hymn beginning with the line, 'Shrinking from the cold hand of death.'"[1]

After spending two short days in London, Wesley set off, on October 5, to Rye, a distance of upwards of sixty miles, and preached to a large and serious congregation. The day after, for the last time, he preached in the open air. This was at Winchelsea, beneath an ash tree, in the churchyard,—a tree long protected by the vicar of the parish, and known for miles round, by the name of "Wesley's Tree," though often mutilated by pilgrim Methodists, who chopped and lopped it for wood to make it into Methodist snuff boxes, and other *un Wesleyan* mementoes of Wesley's last outdoor preaching service. On one occasion, a local preacher was detected in the act of bearing away a bough in pious triumph, was apprehended for the theft, had to beg for mercy, was solemnly reprimanded, and was threatened with transportation, in case of repeating the offence. Wesley's text, at Winchelsea, was a part of Christ's first outdoor sermon, "The kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel;" and he writes: "It seemed as if all that heard were, for the present, almost persuaded to be Christians." Robert Miller was with him at the time, and says: "The word was attended with mighty power, and the tears of the people flowed in torrents."[2] On the evening of the same day, he preached again at Rye.

Returning to London, for the services on Sunday, October 10, Wesley started on the day following for Norfolk. At Colchester, things were disheartening, but he says he had,

[1] Life of James Rogers, p. 44.
[2] *Youth's Instructor*, 1833, p. 330.

"on Monday and Tuesday evenings, wonderful congregations of rich and poor, clergy and laity." One of his hearers was a shoemaker, a young man of twenty-four, who was then convinced of sin, became a useful local preacher, and often returned from his appointments besmeared, from head to foot, with the filthy missiles of persecuting mobs. William Candler, the preaching shoemaker, took a deep interest in the spiritual welfare of soldiers, and was not unrewarded; for, one morning, to his great surprise, he received a government commission to make military shoes, and an extraordinary despatch, from the Colchester commanding officer, that all the shoemakers in the regiments stationed at Harwich, Ipswich, and Colchester, should assist him in executing the martial order. For near fifty years, William Candler rendered important service to the cause of Christ, and then, in 1838, died, kissing his family, and whispering to each, "Good bye; God bless you!"[1] 1790 Age 87

In years past, Colchester had been one of Wesley's favourite places; but now, he says, "the society was lessened, and cold enough; preaching was discontinued, and the spirit of Methodism quite gone, from the preachers and the people." All this was the result of the clerical interference of the Rev. Mr. S——, of St. Peter's, who had adopted the theory, that, wherever there was a gospel ministry in the Church, Methodist preaching ought to cease, and Methodist societies be handed over to the care of the gospel clergyman. To accomplish this at Colchester, no pains were spared, and even gifts and bribes were used. Wesley was annoyed, and, in the course of his sermon, said: "I understand there is a sheep stealer in Colchester, who takes both sheep and lambs from his neighbour's fold at will. Now, I charge that man to desist; or to meet me, and answer for his deeds, at the bar of God, in the day of judgment." The reverend gentleman was present; and his subsequent conduct showed that he was not a forgetful hearer.[2]

Wesley had, in his congregation, at Colchester, another remarkable hearer, Henry Crabb Robinson, who writes:

"It was, I believe, in October 1790, that I heard John Wesley in the

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1841, p. 1. [2] Ibid.

1790 Age 87 great round meeting-house at Colchester. He stood in a wide pulpit, and on each side of him stood a minister, and the two held him up, having their hands under his armpits. His feeble voice was barely audible; but his reverend countenance, especially his long white locks, formed a picture never to be forgotten. There was a vast crowd of lovers and admirers. It was for the most part a pantomime, but the pantomime went to the heart. Of the kind, I never saw anything comparable to it in after life."

Considering the long picturesque life which Mr. Robinson lived subsequent to this, the last sentence is remarkable. In a letter dated October 18, 1790, this young auditor, then fifteen years of age, remarks:

"I felt great satisfaction last week in hearing that veteran in the service of God, the Rev. John Wesley. At another time, and not knowing the man, I should almost have ridiculed his figure. Far from it now. I looked upon him with a respect bordering upon enthusiasm. After the people had sung one verse of a hymn, he arose and said: 'It gives me a great pleasure to find that you have not lost your singing; neither men nor women. You have not forgotten a single note. And I hope, by the assistance of God, which enables you to sing well, you may do all other things well.' A universal 'Amen' followed. At the end of every head or division of his discourse, he finished by a kind of prayer, a momentary wish as it were, not consisting of more than three or four words, which was always followed by a universal buzz. His discourse was short. The text I could not hear. After the last prayer, he rose up and addressed the people on liberality of sentiment, and spoke much against refusing to join with any congregation on account of difference in opinion."[1]

On Wednesday, October 13, Wesley went from Colchester to Norwich, and writes: "I preached; but the house would in nowise contain the congregation. How wonderfully is the tide turned! I am become an honourable man at Norwich. God has, at length, made our enemies to be at peace with us; and scarce any but antinomians open their mouths against us."

The next day, he preached at Yarmouth, to a congregation "far too large to get into the chapel." And the day following at Lowestoft. Here again, he had another distinguished hearer, the poet Crabbe; and repeated the well known lines from Anacreon, with an application of his own.

[1] "Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson," vol. i., p. 20.

"Oft am I by woman told, 1790
Poor Anacreon! thou grow'st old; Age 87
See, thine hairs are falling all:
Poor Anacreon! how they fall!
Whether I grow old or no,
By these signs, I do not know;
But this I need not to be told,
'Tis time to *live*, if I grow old."

Crabbe was greatly struck with the reverend appearance of the aged preacher, with his cheerful air, and the beautiful cadence he gave to the lines he quoted; and, after the service, was introduced to him, and was received with benevolent politeness.[1]

On Saturday, October 16, Wesley preached at Loddon and at Norwich; and, next day, twice again in the latter city, besides administering the sacrament at seven o'clock in the morning, to about one hundred and fifty persons. He writes: "I take knowledge, that the last year's preachers were in earnest. Afterwards, we went to our own parish church; although there was no sermon there, nor at any of the thirty-six churches in the town, save the cathedral and St. Peter's." Who will say that Methodist preaching was not needed in this *non-preaching* diocesan city?

On Monday, October 18, Wesley preached at Swaffham, and at Lynn. At the latter place, he preached again on Tuesday, administered the sacrament,[2] made a collection for the Sunday-schools, and had present to hear him all the clergymen of the town, except one, whose lameness prevented his attending. On Wednesday, the 20th, he occupied the church at Diss, one of the largest in the county. "I suppose," says he, "it has not been so filled these hundred years." His text was, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found"; and the results of the sermon were remarkable and lasting.[3]

On the evening of the same day, and also on the day following, he preached at Bury St. Edmunds; and on Friday, October 22, returned to London.

The last entry, in Wesley's published journal, is dated two days later. "Sunday, October 24—I explained, to a numer-

[1] Crabbe's Life. [2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1856, p. 203.
[3] Reynolds' "Anecdotes of Wesley," p. 39.

1790 Age 87 ous congregation, in Spitalfields church, 'the whole armour of God.' St. Paul's, Shadwell, was still more crowded in the afternoon, while I enforced that important truth, 'one thing is needful'; and I hope many, even then, resolved to choose the better part."

There can be little doubt, that the rest of the year was occupied with what Wesley often called his "*little journeys*," into Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, etc. The reader will catch glimpses of him in the following letters.

The first was addressed to his niece, Miss Sarah Wesley, at Mrs. Whitcomb's, in Margate. The reference to his relatives is significant and painful.

"LONDON, *October* 5, 1790.

"DEAR SALLY,—I am glad you are situated so comfortably. Mrs. Whitcomb does really fear God; and, I hope, before you leave her house, will know what it is to love Him. Providence has not sent you to spend a little time in Margate merely on your own account. Before you leave it, she, with several others, shall have reason to praise God that you came. See that you lose no time. A word spoken in season how good is it! Warn every one, and exhort every one, if by any means you may save some. 'In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not which shall prosper.' Say not, 'I can do nothing, I am slow of speech.' True; but who made the tongue? You have seen sister Boon, a loving, simple hearted woman. Be a follower of her, as she is of Christ. Why should you not meet in her class? I think you will not be ashamed. Is it not a good opportunity of coming a little nearer to them that love you well? Let me have the comfort of one relation, at least, that will be an assistant to me in the blessed work of God.

"I must visit other places before I come into Kent, as well as visit the classes in London; so that I cannot be at Margate till the latter end of next month. If you stay there till then, you will see me.

"I am, my dear Sally, your affectionate uncle,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

The next was written the day after his return to town from Norfolk, and was addressed to James Macdonald, then stationed at Newry, in Ireland. It will be seen, that the Methodist sin of neglecting fasting is not of recent growth.

"LONDON, *October* 23, 1790.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—You have great reason to praise God for His

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1846, p. 1189.

late glorious work at and near Newry; and I make no doubt, but it will continue, yea, and increase, if the subjects of it continue to walk humbly and closely with God. Exhort all our brethren steadily to wait upon God in the appointed means of fasting and prayer; the former of which has been almost universally neglected by the Methodists, both in England and Ireland. But it is a true remark of Kempis: 'The more thou deniest thyself, the more thou wilt grow in grace.' 1790 Age 87

"I am, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Something has been already said respecting the division of circuits. The Dales circuit in 1790 had forty-three preaching places, including Barnardcastle, Bishop Auckland, Appleby, Alstone, Allendale, Wolsingham, Hexham, Penrith, and Kendal,—now all of them circuit towns themselves. The nearest neighbouring circuit, eastwards, was Yarm; westwards, Whitehaven; northwards, Newcastle; and southwards, Thirsk. This will give the reader an idea of the enormous region embraced in the Dales circuit at the time to which we are now adverting. Within the same border, there are now not fewer than at least twenty circuit towns, most of them the centre of a large cluster of smaller towns and villages.[2] The Dales circuit, in 1790, had three itinerant preachers, and 980 members of society, who contributed for the maintenance of their preaching triumvirate, during the quarter in which Wesley died, the sum of £29 8*s.* 6*d.*, sevenpence per member per quarter, and affording £9 16*s.* 2*d.* for the support of each preacher, his wife, and family, and the general maintenance of Methodist machinery throughout the circuit.[3] George Holder was the assistant, and Jonathan Hern and John Wittam were his colleagues. The feed was poor, the pay pauperish, the journeys long, the roads bad, the region mountainous, and the work heavy. There was a wish to divide the circuit; but the following was Wesley's reply to Holder.

"LONDON, *October* 30, 1790.

"DEAR GEORGE,—The assistant in every circuit (not the leaders) is to determine how each preacher is to travel. If Jonathan Hern will not, or

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 113.

[2] Merely in the circuits above mentioned (a fraction of the Dales circuit) there are, at present, 7819 members. (See Minutes of Conference, 1870.)

[3] Circuit manuscript books.

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cannot, take his turn with his fellow labourers, I must send another that will. I do not like dividing circuits. Could not three or more of the northern places be added to the Sunderland or Newcastle circuits, in order to lessen yours, and bring it into a six weeks' circuit? Pray send me the manner of your travelling through your circuit. I think, I shall order it better.

"I am, with love to sister Holder, dear George, yours, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

A small circuit then was one of the things which Wesley thought inimical to the interests of Methodism. Was Wesley right? Unless Methodist preachers can become thoroughly pastoral in their habits,—a thing which triennial changes render extremely difficult,—would it not be better for circuits to be of such a size as to make daily preaching a healthy duty, instead of being so circumscribed that one or two sermons, between sabbaths, is all that their necessities require? This is a serious problem, which we must leave to be solved by others.

Another hindrance, as Wesley thought, to Methodist progress, was the neglect of reading. Hence the following extract from an unpublished letter, dated November 8, 1790.

"If you and your wife strengthen each other's hands in God, then you will surely receive a blessing from Him. But it is not abundance of money, or any creature, that can make us happy without Him.

"It cannot be that the people should grow in grace, unless they give themselves to reading. A reading people will always be a knowing people. A people who talk much will know little. Press this upon them with your might; and you will soon see the fruit of your labours."

An extract from another letter may be given here. The letter was addressed to Alexander Mather.

"No, Aleck, no! The danger of ruin to Methodism does not lie here. It springs from quite a different quarter. Our preachers, many of them, are fallen. They are not spiritual. They are not alive to God. They are soft, enervated, fearful of shame, toil, hardship. They have not the spirit which God gave to Thomas Lee at Pateley Bridge, or to you at Boston. Give me one hundred preachers, who fear nothing but sin, and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen, such alone will shake the gates of hell, and set up the kingdom of heaven upon earth."[2]

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 109.
[2] Sigston's Life of Bramwell.

As we have often shown, Wesley regarded the preaching of the doctrine of Christian perfection as of the utmost importance. The following letter to Adam Clarke is to the same effect. 1790 Age 87

"LONDON, *November* 26, 1790.

"DEAR ADAM,—To retain the grace of God, is much more than to gain it; hardly one in three does this. And this should be strongly and explicitly urged on all who have tasted of perfect love. If we can prove that any of our local preachers or leaders, either directly or indirectly, speak against it, let him be a local preacher or leader no longer. I doubt whether he should continue in society. Because he, that could speak thus in our congregations, cannot be an honest man. I wish sister Clarke to do what she can, but no more than she can. Betsy Ritchie, Miss Johnson, and Mary Clarke are women after my own heart. Last week I had an excellent letter from Mrs. Pawson, (a glorious witness of full salvation,) showing how impossible it is to retain pure love without growing therein. I am, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Such letters might be greatly multiplied. We only add another. He was now an old man, and extremely feeble; and Mr. Ireland, having heard that claret wine had been recommended to him by his medical adviser, sent him a small case as a present. The wine was seized by the custom house authorities, to whom Wesley addressed the following laconic letter.

"CITY ROAD, *November* 14, 1790.

"GENTLEMEN,—Two or three days ago, Mr. Ireland sent me, as a present, two dozen of French claret, which I am ordered to drink, during my present weakness. At the White Swan it was seized. Beg it may be restored to,

"Your obedient servant,

"JOHN WESLEY.

"Whatever duty comes due, I will see duly paid."

The letter seems to have been returned to the dying man; and, across it, a government official curtly wrote: "No. M. W."[2]

Wesley's only publication, in 1790, besides the thirteenth volume of his *Magazine*, was his translation of "The New Testament, with an Analysis of the several Books and Chapters." 16mo, 424 pages. In his preface, he remarks:

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 99.

[2] Manuscript letter, kindly lent by Charles Reed, Esq., M.P.

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"In this edition, the translation is brought as near as possible to the original; yet the alterations are few and seemingly small; but they may be of considerable importance. Though the old division of chapters is retained, for the more easy finding of any text, yet the whole is likewise divided, according to the sense, into distinct sections; a little circumstance which makes many passages more intelligible to the reader. The analysis of every book and epistle is prefixed to it. And this view of the general scope of each will give light to all the particulars."

It ought to be remarked, that this is, by no means, a verbatim reprint of Wesley's translation, published with his Notes in 1755. The book is extremely scarce; but the variations are too numerous and minute to be pointed out in a work like this.

As it respects the *Magazine*, there can be no doubt, that all the articles composing it may be considered to be in harmony with Wesley's own sentiments; but, as usual, in this review, we only notice the articles which Wesley himself contributed; and that, principally, for the purpose of obtaining knowledge of his latest opinions and feelings. We pass over his "Thoughts on Memory"; his critique on Captain Wilson's "Account of the Pelew Islands"; and his "Thoughts on Suicide"; and direct attention to his last, his dying manifesto, on separation from the Established Church. The article is dated, "December 11, 1789," and is in the April number of the *Magazine* for 1790.

He states that, next to the primitive church, he had, from childhood, esteemed the Church of England as the most scriptural, national church in the world; and had, therefore, not only assented to all the doctrines, but observed all the rubric in the liturgy; and that with all possible exactness, even at the peril of his life. He proceeds to give the history of the rise of Methodism, and of his own *irregularities;* and thus concludes:

"I never had any design of separating from the Church. I have no such design now. I do not believe, the Methodists in general design it, when I am no more seen. I do, and will do, all that is in my power to prevent such an event. Nevertheless, in spite of all that I can do, many of them will separate from it (although, I am apt to think, not one half, perhaps not one third of them). These will be so bold and injudicious as to form a separate party, which, consequently, will dwindle away into a dry, dull, separate party. In flat opposition to these, I declare once more,

that I live and die a member of the Church of England; and that none, who regard my judgment or advice, will ever separate from it." 1790 Age 87

To the same effect is his sermon on "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron,"—a sermon which he wrote at Cork, in May 1789, and published in his magazine, twelve months afterwards. He correctly maintains that, in ancient times, the offices of priest and preacher were entirely distinct. Priests were not preachers; and preachers, or prophets, were not priests. He argues that, in the New Testament, the office of an evangelist is not the same as that of a pastor. Pastors presided over the flock, and administered the sacraments; evangelists helped them, and preached the word. He asserts that the same distinction is recognised in the English, presbyterian, and Roman churches; and then, coming to Methodism, tells his readers that Methodist itinerant preachers are evangelists, not pastors; and that their work is wholly and solely to preach, not to administer sacraments. His address to them is worth quoting.

"God has commissioned you to call sinners to repentance; but it does by no means follow from hence, that ye are commissioned to baptize, or to administer the Lord's supper. Ye never dreamt of this, for ten or twenty years after ye began to preach. Ye did not then, like *Korah Dathan*, and *Abiram, seek the priesthood also.* Ye knew, 'No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.' O contain yourselves within your own bounds. Be content with preaching the gospel. Do the work of evangelists. I earnestly advise you, abide in your place; keep your own station. Ye were fifty years ago,—those of you that were then Methodist preachers,—*extraordinary messengers* of God, not going in your own will, but *thrust out*, not to supersede, but to *provoke to jealousy* the *ordinary messengers.* In God's name, stop there! Both by your preaching and example, provoke them to love and good works. Ye are a new phenomenon in the earth; a body of people, who, being of no sect or party, are friends to all parties, and endeavour to forward all, in the knowledge and love of God and man. Ye yourselves were, at first, called in the Church of England; and though ye have and will have a thousand temptations to leave it, regard them not. Be Church of *England* men still. Do not cast away the peculiar glory which God hath put upon you, and frustrate the design of Providence, the very end for which God raised you up."

In reply to the charge that he himself had already separated from the Church, Wesley allows, that he deviated from

1790 Age 87 the rules of the Church in "preaching abroad," in "praying extempore," in forming societies, and in employing lay preachers; but he adds:

> "All this is not separating from the Church? So far from it, that, whenever I have opportunity, I attend the Church service myself, and advise all our societies so to do. Nevertheless, the generality even of religious people naturally think, 'I am inconsistent.' And they cannot but think so, unless they observe my two principles. The one, that I dare not separate from the Church, that I believe it would be a sin so to do; the other, that I believe it would be a sin not to *vary* from it in the points above mentioned. I say, put these two principles together, first, I will not *separate* from the Church; yet, secondly, in cases of necessity, I will *vary* from it; and inconsistency vanishes away. I have been true to my profession from 1730 to this day."

Here we leave the matter. This is the last time we shall quote Wesley on separation from the Church. We care not either to vindicate or to condemn his thoughts and course of conduct. In a few lines, Wesley here says all that can be said in favour of the anomalous position in which he stood: he did not *separate*, but he *varied* from the Church of England. It will be difficult for either sophistry or sound argument to make either more or less than this of the vexed question,—the difference between Wesley's profession and his practice in reference to his continued adherence to, or separation from, the Established Church. He lived and died a hearty, but inconsistent Churchman.

There is another point which must be mentioned. The reader has already seen Wesley's intense anxiety in reference to rich Methodists. In the last fourteen sermons that he wrote, during the last two years of his eventful life, and which were, for the first time, published in the magazines for 1790, 1791, and 1792, he again and again, in the strongest and most affecting language, reverts to this momentous matter. Exception may be taken to his opinions; but they are worthy of being quoted. They are the last sentiments of an old man, with unparalleled experience; and, throughout a long life, were by himself reduced to practice. The following are extracts.

In the remarkable sermon, on Jeremiah viii. 22, written in Dublin, July 2, 1789, in which he tries to answer the

question, "Why has Christianity done so little good in the world?" he writes: 1790 Age 87

"Who regards those solemn words, *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth*? Of the three rules, which are laid down on this head, in the sermon on *The Mammon of Unrighteousness*, you may find many that observe the first rule, namely, *Gain all you can*. You may find a few that observe the second, *Save all you can*. But how many have you found, that observe the third rule, *Give all you can*? Have you reason to believe, that five hundred of these are to be found among fifty thousand *Methodists*? And, yet, nothing can be more plain, than that all who observe the two first rules, without the third, will be twofold more the children of hell than ever they were before.

"O that God would enable me once more, before I go hence and am no more seen, to lift up my voice like a trumpet to those who *gain* and *save* all they can, but do not *give* all they can! Ye are the men, some of the chief men, who continually grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and, in a great measure, stop His gracious influence from descending on our assemblies. Many of your brethren, beloved of God, have not food to eat; they have not raiment to put on; they have not a place where to lay their head. And why are they thus distressed? Because *you* impiously, unjustly, and cruelly detain from them what your Master and theirs lodges in *your* hands, on purpose to supply *their* wants. In the name of God, what are you doing? Do you neither fear God, nor regard man? Why do you not deal your bread to the hungry? And cover the naked with a garment? Have you laid out, in your own costly apparel, what would have answered both these intentions? Did God command you so to do? Does He commend you for so doing? Did He entrust you with *His*,—not *your*,—goods for this end? And does He now say, 'Servant of God, well done'? You well know He does not. This idle expense has no approbation, either from God or your own conscience. But, you say, 'You can *afford* it!' O be ashamed to take such miserable nonsense into your mouths. Never more utter such stupid cant, such palpable absurdity! Can any steward *afford* to be an arrant knave? to waste his lord's goods? Can any servant *afford* to lay out his master's money, any otherwise than his master appoints him? So far from it, that whoever does this ought to be excluded from a Christian society.

"I am distressed. I know not what to do. I see what I might have done once. I might have said peremptorily and expressly, 'Here I am: I and my Bible. I will not, I dare not, vary from this book, either in great things or small. I have no power to dispense with one jot or tittle of what is contained therein. I am determined to be a Bible Christian, not almost but altogether. Who will meet me on this ground? Join me on this, or not at all.' With regard to dress in particular, I might have been as firm, (and I now see it would have been far better,) as either the people called quakers, or the Moravian brethren. I might have said, 'This is *our* manner of dress, which we know is both scriptural and rational. If you join with us,

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you are to dress as we do: but you need not join us unless you please.' But alas! the time is now past. And what I can do now, I cannot tell. The Methodists grow more and more self indulgent, because they *grow rich.* Although many of them are still deplorably poor (*Tell it not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Askelon!*), yet many others, in the space of twenty, thirty, or forty years, are twenty, thirty, yea, a hundred times richer than they were when they first entered the society. And it is an observation which admits of few exceptions, that nine in ten of these decreased in grace, in the same proportion as they increased in wealth. Indeed, according to the natural tendency of riches, we cannot expect it to be otherwise.

"But how astonishing a thing is this! Does it not seem (and yet this cannot be!) that true scriptural Christianity has a tendency, in process of time, to undermine and destroy itself? For, wherever it spreads, it must cause diligence and frugality, which, in the natural course of things, beget riches. And riches naturally beget pride, love of the world, and every temper that is destructive to Christianity. Now, if there be no way to prevent this, Christianity is inconsistent with itself, and, of consequence, cannot stand, cannot long continue among any people; since, wherever it generally prevails, it saps its own foundation.

"But, allowing that diligence and frugality must produce riches, is there no means to hinder riches destroying the religion of those that possess them? I can see only one possible way; find out another who can. Do you gain all you can, and save all you can? Then you must, in the nature of things, grow rich. Then if you have any desire to escape the damnation of hell, *give* all you can; otherwise I can have no more hope of your salvation, than for that of Judas Iscariot.

"I call God to record upon my soul, that I advise no more than I practise. I do—blessed be God, gain, and save, and give all I can. And so, I trust in God, I shall do, while the breath of God is in my nostrils. But what then? I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus, my Lord! Still

> 'I give up every plea beside,
> Lord, I am damned! but Thou hast died!'"[1]

To the same effect is Wesley's searching and terrible sermon, on the Rich Fool, written at Balham, February 19, 1790; and another written at Bristol, September 21, 1790, on the text, "If riches increase, set not thine heart upon them." In the latter sermon, he writes:

"By whatsoever means thy riches increase, whether with or without labour; whether by trade, legacies, or any other way, unless thy charities increase in the same proportion,—unless thou givest a full tenth of thy

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1790, pp. 348, 400, etc..

substance, of thy fixed and occasional income, thou dost undoubtedly set thy heart upon thy gold, and it will *eat thy flesh as fire.* 1790 Age 87

"But O! who can convince a rich man, that he sets his heart upon riches? For considerably above half a century, I have spoken on this head, with all the plainness that was in my power. But with how little effect? I doubt whether I have, in all that time, convinced fifty misers of covetousness.

"I have a message from God unto thee, O rich man, whether thou wilt hear, or whether thou wilt forbear. Riches have increased with thee; at the peril of thy soul, *set not thine heart upon them.* Be thankful to Him that gave thee such a talent, so much power of doing good. Yet dare not to rejoice over them, but with fear and trembling.

"Let us descend to particulars; and see that each of you deal faithfully with his own soul. If any of you have now twice, thrice, or four times as much substance as when you first saw my face, faithfully examine yourselves, and see if you do not set your hearts, if not directly on riches themselves, yet, on some of the things that are purchaseable thereby, which comes to the same thing. Do you not *eat* more plentifully or more delicately than you did ten or twenty years ago? Do not you use more *drink*, or drink of a more *costly* kind, than you did then? Do you sleep on as hard a bed as you did once, suppose your health will bear it? Do you *fast* as often now you are rich, as you did when you were poor? Ought you not in all reason to do this, rather more often than more seldom? I am afraid, your own heart condemns you. You are not clear in this matter.

"Do not some of you seek no small part of happiness in that trifle of trifles, dress? Do not you bestow more money, or, which is the same, more time and pains upon it, than you did once? I doubt this is not done to please God. Then it pleases the devil. If you laid aside your needless ornaments, some years since, ruffles, necklaces, spider caps, ugly, unbecoming bonnets, costly linen, expensive laces, have you not, in defiance of religion and reason, taken to them again?

"After having served you between sixty and seventy years, with dim eyes, shaking hands, and tottering feet, I give you one more advice before I sink into the dust. Mark those words of St. Paul, *Those that desire*, or endeavour, *to be rich*, that moment, *fall into temptation;* yea, a deep gulf of temptation, out of which nothing less than Almighty power can deliver them. Permit me to come a little closer still: perhaps I may not trouble you any more on this head. I am pained for you that are *rich in this world.* Do you give all you can? You who receive £500 a year, and spend only £200, do you give £300 back to God? If not, you certainly rob God of that £300. 'Nay, may I not do what I will with *my own?*' Here lies the ground of your mistake. It is not your *own.* It cannot be, unless you are Lord of heaven and earth. 'However, I must provide for my children.' Certainly. But how? By making them rich? When you will probably make them heathens, as some of you have done already. Leave them enough to live on, not in idleness and luxury, but by honest industry. And if you have not children, upon

1790 Age 87 what scriptural or rational principle can you leave a groat behind you, more than will bury you? I pray consider: What are you the better for what you leave behind you? What does it signify, whether you leave behind you ten thousand pounds, or ten thousand shoes and boots? Oh, leave nothing behind you! Send all you have before you into a better world! Lend it, lend it all unto the Lord, and it shall be paid you again! Is there any danger that *His* truth should fail? It is fixed as the pillars of heaven. Haste, haste, my brethren, haste! lest you be called away, before you have settled what you have, on this security!" [1]

To say the least, this was plain speaking, such as is seldom heard at present; the following, in the sermon on Matthew vi. 22, 23, written at Bristol, September 25, 1789, is terrific.

"How great is the darkness of that execrable wretch (I can give him no better title, be he rich or poor), who will sell his own child to the devil! who will barter her own eternal happiness, for any quantity of gold or silver! What a monster would any man be accounted, who devoured the flesh of his own offspring! And is he not as great a monster, who, by his own act and deed, gives her to be devoured by that roaring lion? As he certainly does (so far as is in his power), who marries her to an ungodly man. 'But he is rich; he has £10,000!' What if it were £100,000? The more the worse; the less probability will she have of escaping the damnation of hell. With what face wilt thou look upon her, when she tells thee in the realms below, 'Thou hast plunged me into this place of torment! Hadst thou given me to a good man, however poor, I might now have been in Abraham's bosom!'

"Are any of you, that are called Methodists, seeking to marry your children well (as the cant phrase is), that is, to sell them to some purchaser, that has much money, but little or no religion? Have *ye* profited no more by all ye have heard? Man, woman, think what you are about. Dare *you* also sell your child to the devil? You undoubtedly do this (as far as in you lies), when you marry a son or a daughter to a child of the devil, though it be one that wallows in gold and silver. O take warning in time! Beware of the gilded bait! Death and hell are hid beneath. Prefer grace before gold and precious stones; glory in heaven, to riches on earth! If you do not, you are worse than the very Canaanites. They only made their children *pass through the fire* to Moloch. You make yours *pass into the fire* that never shall be quenched, and *to stay in it for ever.* O how great is the darkness that causes you, after you have done this, *to wipe your mouth and say, you have done no evil!*

"Upwards of fifty years, I have ministered unto you. I have been your servant for Christ's sake. During this time, I have given you many solemn warnings on this head. I now give you one more, perhaps the last. Dare any of you, in choosing your calling or situation, eye the

[1] *Methodist Magazine*, 1792, p. 341, etc.

things on earth, rather than the things above? In choosing a profession or a companion of life for your child, do you look at earth or heaven? And can you deliberately prefer, either for yourself or your offspring, a child of the devil with money, to a child of God without it? Repent, repent of your vile earthly mindedness! Renounce the title of Christians; or prefer, both in your own case and the case of your children, grace to money, and heaven to earth. For the time to come, at least, *let your eye be single*, that your *whole body may be full of light!*" 1790 Age 87

These were Wesley's last words to the Methodists. The extracts are long; but, in this money making, mammon worshipping, intensely worldly age, they may be useful.

The other sermons, published in the last year of Wesley's life, and in the year subsequent to his death, are well worthy of the reader's notice. That on "Knowing Christ after the flesh" is perhaps the only one, in the English language, on such a subject. That on the text, "There is one God," is characteristically thoughtful, keen, logical, and evangelical. That on "Walking by Faith," terse, vigorous, earnest, practical, and terribly faithful. That on "The Wedding Garment," an excellent exposition of an often ill used text. That on "The Deceitfulness of the Human Heart" is one which none but a man like Wesley could have preached. That on "Atheism," ingenious, searching, and powerful. That on "The Treasure in Earthen Vessels," simple and beautiful. While that on "Life like a Dream" was being printed on the very day when Wesley's corpse lay in the chapel in City Road; and that on "Faith, the evidence of things not seen," was the last he ever wrote, and was finished only six weeks previous to his death.

Both the last mentioned deserve quoting. They are the profoundly interesting musings of an old man, conscious that he must soon enter the spiritual and unseen world. Imagining a disembodied soul before him, he thus soliloquises.

"Now that your eyes are open, see how inexpressibly different are all the things that are now around you! What a difference do you perceive in yourself! Where is your body? Your house of clay? Where are your limbs? your hands, your feet, your head? There they lie; cold, insensible! What a change is in the immortal spirit! You see everything around you: but how? Not with eyes of flesh and blood! You hear; but not by a stream of undulating air, striking on an extended membrane. You feel; but in how wonderful a manner! You have no

1790 nerves to convey the ethereal fire to the common sensory; rather are you not now all eye, all ear, all feeling, all perception?"
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Again, in his last, the sermon on faith:

"How will this material universe appear to a disembodied spirit? Who can tell whether any of these objects, that now surround us, will appear the same as they do now? What astonishing scenes will then discover themselves to our newly opening senses! Probably fields of ether, not only tenfold, but ten thousand fold, 'the length of this terrene.' And with what variety of furniture, animate and inanimate! How many orders of beings, not discovered by organs of flesh and blood! Perhaps 'thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers!' And shall we not then, as far as angels' ken, survey the bounds of creation, and see every place where the Almighty

'Stopped His rapid wheels, and said,
This be thy just circumference, O world!'

Yea, shall we not be able to move, quick as thought, through the wide realms of uncreated night? Above all, the moment we step into eternity, shall we not feel ourselves swallowed up of Him, who is in this and every place, who filleth heaven and earth? It is only the veil of flesh and blood which now hinders us from perceiving, that the great Creator cannot but fill the whole immensity of space. He is every moment above us, beneath us, and on every side. Indeed, in this dark abode, this land of shadows, this region of sin and death, the thick cloud, which is interposed between, conceals Him from our sight. But then the veil will disappear, and He will appear in unclouded majesty, God over all, blessed for ever!"

The blessed old man already had glimpses of the shining ones, and of the gates of that celestial city, into which, six weeks after these words were written, he triumphantly entered.

ONLY two months of Wesley's eventful life are left unnarrated. The following letters, belonging to this period, will be read with interest. 1791 Age 88

The first was addressed to Adam Clarke, who, in Dublin, had buried his eldest daughter, and was himself dangerously afflicted with rheumatic affection in the head.[1]

"*January* 3, 1791.

"DEAR ADAM,—You startle me when you talk of grieving so much for the death of an infant. This is certainly a proof of inordinate affection; and, if you love them *thus*, all your children will die. How did Mr. De Renty behave when he supposed his wife to be dying? There is a pattern for a Christian.

"But you forget to send me anything about magnetism. John Bredin is a weak brother: let him not complain. He behaved ill both at Jersey and Guernsey; but let him behave well now, and that will be forgotten. I wish my dear sister Clarke and you many happy years; and am, dear Adam, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

The next has not before been published. It was written to Thomas Taylor, then in the Hull circuit. Dr. King was made archbishop of Dublin in 1702, and died in 1729. He was author of "*De Origine Mali*," written to prove, that the existence of natural and moral evil is not incompatible with the power and goodness of the Deity, and may be accounted for without the supposition of an evil principle.

"LONDON, *January* 6, 1791.

"DEAR TOMMY,—With regard to the powerful workings of the Spirit, I think those words of our Lord are chiefly to be understood: 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof,' (thou art sure of the fact,) 'but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth.'

"Make your yearly subscription when you see best, only take care it does not interfere with any other subscription.

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[1] Clarke's Life, vol. i., pp. 278, 283.

[2] *Wesley Banner*, 1852, p. 275; and *Wesleyan Times*, June 1, 1866

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"The tract of Archbishop King has been particularly admired by many persons of excellent sense. I do not admire it so much as they do; but I like it well. Yet, I have corrected a far better tract on the same subject, perhaps, the last I shall have to publish.[1]

"Indeed, I hope I shall not live to be useless. I wish you and yours many happy years, and am, dear Tommy, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."

The next letter, addressed to Miss Bolton of Witney, contains an important reference to Wesley's state of health.

"LONDON, *January* 12, 1791.

"MY DEAR NANCY,—I thank you for your welcome present, and rejoice to hear that your health is better. What is it, which is good for us, that our Lord will not give, if we can but trust Him?

"These four last days, I have had better health than I had for several months before. Only my sight continues much as it was. But good is the will of the Lord.

"I am, dear Nancy, affectionately yours,

"J. WESLEY."[2]

The following was addressed to the wife of Adam Clarke, and refers to her husband's serious affliction, as well as to the loss of their daughter.

"LONDON, *January* 18, 1791.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—Before this time, I hope God has heard prayer, and given brother Clarke a little more ease. I should suspect a dropsy in the brain, which, though formerly judged incurable, has lately been cured.

"Both brother Clarke and you have large proofs that whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. He knoweth the way whence you go; when you have been tried, you shall come forth as gold.

"I wonder at the folly of Mr. V. Surely, he is a very weak man. But I shall judge better when I have seen his performances. Peace be multiplied again!

"I am, my dear sister, ever yours,

"JOHN WESLEY."[3]

[1] This was probably "An Essay on the Liberty of Moral Agents," published consecutively in the first five numbers of the *Arminian Magazine* for 1791, and concerning which Wesley writes: "I do not remember to have ever seen a more strong and beautiful treatise on moral liberty than the following; which I, therefore, earnestly recommend to the consideration of all those who desire 'to vindicate the ways of God with man.'"

[2] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 157.

[3] Dunn's Life of Clarke, p. 80.

John Booth was now assistant in Keighley circuit, and to him was addressed the following. 1791 Age 88

"LONDON, *January* 29, 1791.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—You give me a very agreeable account of the progress of the work of God in your circuit. As to the poor, self conceited enthusiasts in Keighley, it seems best that you should never name them in public; but, when occasion offers, strike at the root of their errors, by clearly proving the truth which they deny. And whenever you meet with any of them in private, then speak and spare not. Whenever you have opportunity of speaking to believers, urge them to go on to perfection. Spare no pains; and God, even our own God, still give you His blessing!

"I am, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Miss Cambridge was an Irish Methodist, twenty-nine years of age, and had established meetings in various parts of the town of Bandon, at which she prayed and occasionally exhorted. She had also held similar meetings at Kinsale, Youghal, and other places. Many of the Methodists, and some of the Methodist preachers, pronounced her public addresses to be entirely irregular, and what ought not to be tolerated in the Christian church. She wrote to Wesley for advice; and received the following reply,—Wesley's last utterance on female preaching.

"LONDON, *January* 31, 1791.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—I received your letter an hour ago. I thank you for writing so largely and so freely; do so always to me as your friend, as one that loves you well. Mr. Barber has the glory of God at heart; and so have his fellow labourers. Give them all honour, and obey them in all things as far as conscience permits. But it will not permit you to be silent when God commands you to speak; yet, I would have you give as little offence as possible; and, therefore, I would advise you not to speak at any place where a preacher is speaking at the same time, lest you should draw away his hearers. Also, avoid the first appearance of pride or magnifying yourself. If you want books, or anything, let me know; I have your happiness much at heart. During the little time I have to stay on earth, pray for,

"Your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Ezekiel Cooper was the son of an officer in the army of

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 146.
[2] Memoir of Miss A. Cambridge, p. 39.

1791 Age 88 the American revolution, and was now twenty-eight years of age, and a Methodist preacher at Annapolis. He was a man of great mental vigour and versatility, almost unequalled in debate, and was called, by the American Methodists, *Lycurgus*, in reference to his profound wisdom. He was a diligent student, and a close observer of men and things, lived a long life of celibacy, was frugal to a fault, left behind him an estate of about fifty thousand dollars, and died in 1847, the oldest Methodist preacher in the world. When he entered the ministry in 1783, the American Methodists numbered eighty-three preachers, and fifteen thousand members; when he died, their ministry numbered five thousand, and their membership above a million.[1] To him Wesley wrote the last letter which he posted to America.

"NEAR LONDON, *February* 1, 1791.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Those that desire to write, or to say anything, to me, have no time to lose, for time has shaken me by the hand, and death is not far behind. But I have reason to be thankful for the time that is past. I felt few of the infirmities of old age, for fourscore and six years. It was not till a year and a half ago, that my strength and my sight failed. And still I am enabled to scrawl a little, and to creep, though I cannot run. Probably I should not be able to do so much, did not many of you assist me by your prayers.

"I have given a distinct account of the work of God, which has been wrought in Britain and Ireland, for more than half a century. We want some of you to give us a connected relation, of what our Lord has been doing in America, since the time that Richard Boardman accepted the invitation, and left his country to serve you. See that you never give place to one thought of separating from your brethren in Europe. Lose no opportunity of declaring to all men, that the Methodists are one people in all the world, and that it is their full determination so to continue,—

'Though mountains rise, and oceans roll,
To sever us in vain.'

"To the care of our common Lord I commit you, and am your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Such was Wesley's dying legacy to the transatlantic Methodists.

The next is brief, but full of interest. For many years

[1] Sprague's "Annals of the American Methodist Pulpit."
[2] *Methodist Magazine*, 1804, p. 46.

Wesley had been accustomed to leave London, on, or about, the 1st of March, for what he was accustomed to call his long journey, to the north, or to Ireland. Though so aged and feeble, he fully intended to do the same again; and Henry Moore relates, that, in reference to this, he actually sent his chaise and his horses before him to Bristol, and took places for himself and his friends in the Bath coach; but, almost on the very day when he purposed to begin afresh his "long journey" on earth, the venerable pilgrim left earth for heaven. 1791 Age 88

"LONDON, *February* 6, 1791.

"DEAR SIR,—On Wednesday, March 17, I purpose, if God permit, to come from Gloucester to Worcester; and, on Thursday, the 18th, to Stourport. If our friends at Worcester are displeased, we cannot help it. Wishing you and yours all happiness,

"I am, dear sir, your affectionate servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."

The letter was addressed to Mr. York, of Stourport; but was not sent. At the bottom of it is the last line that Wesley ever wrote.

"February 28—This morning I found this in my bureau." [1]

In a letter, given on page 622, Mr. Thomas Roberts was directed, in an emergency, to leave Bristol for Haverford-west circuit. He went, and had to encounter difficulties. Wesley now wrote to him as follows.

"LONDON, *February* 8, 1791.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Who was it that opposed your reducing the preachers, in the circuit, to two? and on what pretence? We must needs reduce all our expenses everywhere as far as possible. You must never leave off till you carry this point, and constitute bands in each large society. When the lecture begins at Carmarthen, it will then be time enough to prevent any ill effects of it. I am glad to hear your journey home has not been in vain. My best wishes attend my friends at Traison and Langwair.

"I am, dear Tommy, yours, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."

The original, from which this is copied, was written by an amanuensis, but is signed in Wesley's own tremulous hand-writing.

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 147.

1791 Age 88 We have already seen that Adam Clarke had been dangerously ill in Dublin. In fact, it was reported in England that he was dead; and William Stevens actually preached his funeral sermon in the isle of Jersey. He was now slowly recovering, had entered himself a medical student in Trinity college, Dublin, and had founded a "Strangers' Friend Society," like those already instituted in London, and in Bristol.[1] To him Wesley now addressed the following.

"LONDON, *February* 9, 1791.

"DEAR ADAM,—You have great reason to bless God for giving you strength according to your day. He has indeed supported you in an uncommon manner under these complicated afflictions. You may well say, 'I will put my trust in Thee as long as I live.' I will desire Dr. Whitehead thoroughly to consider your case, and to give us his thoughts upon it. I am not afraid of your doing too little, but too much. I am in continual danger of this. Do little at a time, that you may do the more. My love to sisters Cookman and Boyle, but it is a doubt with me whether I shall cross the seas any more.

"What preacher was it who first omitted meeting the select society? I wonder it did not destroy the work!

"You have done right in setting up the strangers' society: it is an excellent institution.

"I am quite at a loss concerning Mr. Maddan; I know not what to think of him. Send me your best thoughts concerning him.

"Let not the excluded preachers by any means creep in again. In any wise, write, and send me your thoughts on *animal magnetism*. I set my face against that device of Satan. Two of our preachers here are in danger of that satanical delusion; but, if they persist to defend it, I must drop them. I know its principles full well.

"With much love to your wife, I am, etc.,

"JOHN WESLEY."[2]

Wesley was quite ready to "cross seas," as he had already done so often, in his Master's service; but he might well doubt his ability. Exactly three weeks after writing thus to Adam Clarke, he crossed the dark river of death.

For sixty-five years, Wesley had been an earnest, laborious, self denying, and unceasing preacher of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God"; and, notwithstanding his extreme age and feebleness, he continued in his beloved employ until

[1] Everett's Life of Clarke.
[2] *Wesleyan Times*, June 1, 1866.

within seven days of his decease. The following was his last week of public labour. 1791 Age 88

On Thursday, February 17, he preached at Lambeth, then a thriving suburban village, from the text, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth; but for that which endureth to everlasting life." Returning home, he seemed to be unwell, and said he had taken cold.

Friday the 18th, he read and wrote as usual, dined at Mr. Urling's, and preached at Chelsea, in the evening, from the words, "The king's business requireth haste." Once or twice he was obliged to stop, and to tell the people that his cold so affected his voice as to prevent his speaking without these necessary pauses. He had, as usual, arranged to meet the classes for the renewal of their tickets; but was persuaded to leave this part of his work to his companions, James Rogers, and Joseph Bradford.

Saturday, the 19th, was principally employed in reading and writing. The following was addressed to Mrs. Susanna Knapp, of Worcester, and shows his unquenchable Christian ardour.

"LONDON, *February* 19, 1791.

"MY DEAR SUKY,—As the state of my health is exceeding wavering, and waxes worse, I cannnot yet lay down any plans for my future journeys. Indeed, I propose, if God permit, to set out for Bristol on the 28th instant; but how much further I shall be able to go, I cannot yet determine. If I am pretty well, I hope to be at Worcester about the 22nd of March. To find you and yours in health of body and mind will be a great pleasure to,

"My dear Suky, yours affectionately,

"J. WESLEY."[1]

On the same day, Wesley went out to dinner, at Mrs. Griffith's, Islington, and, while there, desired a friend to read to him the fourth and three following chapters of the book of Job, containing the speech of Eliphaz, and the answer of Job, and strikingly appropriate to the case of a dying man. After dinner, he purposed to meet the penitents at City Road, but was prevailed on to allow Mr. Brackenbury to take his place.

Next morning (Sunday) he rose, at his usual hour, but was utterly unfit for the sabbath services. At seven o'clock he was obliged to lie down again; and slept for above three

[1] Manuscript letter, kindly lent by Mr. Dimbleby of Malvern.

1791 Age 88 hours. In the afternoon, he had again to go to bed; had another sleep; and then, after two of his own sermons had been read to him, came downstairs to supper.

On Monday, the 21st, he seemed better, and, despite persuasion, would fulfil an engagement he had made to dine at Twickenham. His niece, Miss Sarah Wesley, and Miss Ritchie, went with him. On the way he called upon Lady Mary Fitzgerald, and conversed and prayed most sweetly.

Tuesday, the 22nd, he proceeded with his usual work; dined at Mr. Horton's, Islington; and preached in City Road chapel, from, "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." After this, he met the leaders.

Wednesday, February 23, he arose at four a.m., as he also did the day following, and, accompanied by Mr. Rogers, set out to Leatherhead, eighteen miles from London, to visit a magistrate, in whose dining room he preached, from "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near." This was Wesley's last sermon.

Thursday, February 24, he spent with his old friend, Mr. Wolff, at Balham, where he was cheerful, and seemed nearly as well as usual.[1]

During the day, he wrote his last letter, which was addressed to Wilberforce, who had brought before parliament the question, which Wesley was one of the first to advocate, the abolition of slavery.

"LONDON, *February* 24, 1791.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Unless the Divine Power has raised you up to be as Athanasius, *contra mundum*, I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise, in opposing that execrable villainy, which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils; but, *if God be for you, who can be against you?* Are all of them together stronger than God? O! '*be not weary in well doing.*' Go on, in the name of God, and in the power of His might, till even American slavery, the vilest that ever saw the sun, shall vanish away before it.

"Reading this morning a tract, wrote by a poor African, I was particularly struck by that circumstance,—that a man who has a black skin, being wronged or outraged by a white man, can have no redress; it being

[1] Life of James Rogers.

a *law*, in our colonies, that the *oath* of a black, against a white, goes for nothing. What villainy is this! 1791 Age 88

"That He who has guided you, from your youth up, may continue to strengthen you in this and all things, is the prayer of, dear sir,

"Your affectionate servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

Friday, February 25, Mr. Wolff having brought him home, to City Road, Wesley went upstairs, and requested that, for half an hour, he should be left alone. When the time expired, faithful Joseph Bradford found him so unwell, that he sent for Dr. Whitehead. "Doctor," said the dying patriarch, "they are more afraid than hurt."

Saturday, February 26, was principally passed in drowsiness and sleep.

Sunday morning, February 27, he seemed better, got up, sat in his chair, looked cheerful, and repeated, from one of his brother's hymns,—

"Till glad I lay this body down,
Thy servant, Lord, attend!
And oh! my life of mercy crown
With a triumphant end!"

And then, soon after, with marked emphasis, he said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." His niece, Miss Wesley, and Miss Ritchie prayed with him. "When at Bristol," said he, alluding to his illness there in 1753, "my words were,

'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me!'"

Miss Ritchie asked, "Is that your language now?" "Yes," said he. "Christ is all! He is all!" He then dozed, and sometimes wandered; but, in his wanderings, was always preaching or meeting classes.

On Monday, February 28, his weakness increased. Dr. Whitehead wished for further assistance. Wesley replied: "Dr. Whitehead knows my constitution better than any one. I am quite satisfied, and will have no one else."[2] Most of the

[1] Wilberforce's Life, vol. i., p. 297; and Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 437.

[2] Jacob Jones, Esq., however, seems to have been called in. He was then a young man, and had just joined the Methodists. He died, in Finsbury Square, in 1830.—(*Methodist Magazine*, 1830, p. 511.)

1791 Age 88 day was spent in sleep. He seldom spoke; but, once, in a wakeful interval, was heard saying, in a low, distinct voice, "There is no way into the holiest, but by the blood of Jesus." Then referring to the text, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich," etc., he remarked, with solemn emphasis, "That is the foundation, the only foundation, there is no other." It was now evident to all, that he was beginning to sleep his last sleep. His friends were intensely anxious and alarmed. Poor, broken hearted, Joseph Bradford despatched notes to the preachers, asking their prayers, in the following terms.

"*February* 27, 1791.

"DEAR BROTHER,—Mr. Wesley is very ill: pray! pray! pray!

"I am your affectionate brother,

"JOSEPH BRADFORD."[1]

All was unavailing. Wesley's work was ended. On Tuesday, March 1, after a restless night, being asked if he suffered pain, he answered, "No," and began singing,—

"All glory to God in the sky,
And peace upon earth be restored!
O Jesus, exalted on high,
Appear our omnipotent Lord.
Who, meanly in Bethlehem born,
Didst stoop to redeem a lost race,
Once more to Thy people return,
And reign in Thy kingdom of grace.

Oh, wouldst Thou again be made known,
Again in the Spirit descend;
And set up in each of Thy own
A kingdom that never shall end!
Thou only art able to bless,
And make the glad nations obey,
And bid the dire enmity cease,
And bow the whole world to Thy sway."

Here, while breathing faith and universal benevolence, his strength failed. "I want to write," said he. A pen was put into his hand, and paper was placed before him. His hand had forgot its cunning. "I cannot," said the dying man. "Let me write for you," remarked Miss Ritchie: "tell me

[1] Smith's "History of Methodism," vol. i., p. 608.

what you wish to say." "Nothing," he replied, "but that God is with us." 1791 Age 88

"I will get up," said he; and, while his friends were arranging his clothes, the happy old man again began singing,—

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath;
And, when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers:
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.

Happy the man whose hopes rely
On Israel's God; He made the sky,
And earth, and seas, with all their train;
His truth for ever stands secure,
He saves the' oppressed, He feeds the poor,
And none shall find His promise vain."

Once more seated in his chair, he, in a weak voice, said: "Lord, Thou givest strength to those that can speak, and to those that cannot. Speak, Lord, to all our hearts, and let them know that Thou loosest tongues." And again he began to sing, what proved to be his last song on earth:

"To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Who sweetly all agree."

But here his voice failed, and, after gasping for breath, he said: "Now we have done. Let us all go."

Full of happiness, but utterly exhausted, he was put to bed, where, after a short but quiet sleep, he opened his eyes, and, addressing the weeping watchers who stood around him, said, "Pray, and praise!" and, of course, they at once complied. Then he asked Joseph Bradford about the key and contents of his bureau, remarking, "I would have all things ready for my executors. Let me be buried in nothing but what is woollen, and let my corpse be carried in my coffin into the chapel." And then, as if no other earthly matters required his attention, he again called out, "Pray and praise!" Down fell his friends upon their knees, and fervent were the dying patriarch's responses, especially to John Broadbent's prayer, that God would still bless the system of doctrine and discipline, which Wesley had been the means of

1791 Age 88 establishing. On rising from prayer, each watcher drew near to the bed of the expiring saint, and, with affectionate solicitude, awaited the coming of the shining ones to conduct him home. With the utmost placidity, he saluted each one present, shook hands, and said, "Farewell! farewell!"

Conflict there was none. The scene was the peaceful setting of a glorious sun, undisturbed by the slightest soughing wind, undimmed by the smallest intervening cloud.

He tried to speak; but his friends found it difficult to make out what he meant, except that he wished his sermon on "The Love of God to Fallen Man," founded on the text, "Not as the offence, so also is the free gift," to be "scattered abroad, and given to everybody."[1] Seeing that those around him were at a loss to understand what he tried to say, the grand old Christian gladiator paused; and, summoning, for a final effort, all the little strength he had remaining, he exclaimed, in a tone well-nigh supernatural, "The best of all is, God is with us!" And then, after another pause, and while lifting his arm in grateful triumph, he emphatically reiterated, "The best of all is, God is with us!"

Nature was once more exhausted. Some one wetted his parched lips. "It will not do," said he; "we must take the consequence. Never mind the poor carcase."

James Rogers and Thomas Rankin were standing by his bed; but his sight was so nearly gone, that he was unable to recognise their features. "Who are these?" he asked. "Sir," said Mr. Rogers, "we are come to rejoice with you; you are going to receive your crown." "It is the Lord's doing," replied Wesley, "and it is marvellous in our eyes."

Being told that his brother's widow had come to see him, he thanked her, affectionately endeavoured to kiss her, and remarked, "He giveth His servants rest." She wet his lips; on which he repeated his constant thanksgiving after meals: "We thank Thee, O Lord, for these and all Thy mercies. Bless the Church and king, and grant us truth and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for ever and ever!" Then,

[1] In compliance with his wish, ten thousand copies were printed, and gratuitously distributed. (Rogers' Life.)

pausing a little, he cried, "The clouds drop fatness." After another pause, "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge! Pray and praise!" And again his friends fell upon their knees. 1791 Age 88

During the night, he scores of times repeated the words, "I'll praise. I'll praise!" but could say nothing more. Next morning, Wednesday, March 2, Joseph Bradford prayed with him. It was a few minutes before ten o'clock. Around the bed there knelt his niece, Miss Sarah Wesley; one of his executors, Mr. Horton; his medical attendant, Dr. Whitehead; his book steward, George Whitfield; the present occupants of his house, James and Hester Ann Rogers, and their little boy; and his friends and visitors, Robert Carr Brackenbury, and Elizabeth Ritchie,—eleven persons altogether. Bradford, so long Wesley's faithful friend and travelling companion, was the mouthpiece of the other ten. "Farewell!" cried Wesley,—the last word he uttered; and then, as Joseph Bradford was saying, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and this heir of glory shall come in!" Wesley gathered up his feet in the presence of his brethren; and, without a groan and without a sigh, was gone. He died about ten o'clock a.m., on Wednesday, March 2, 1791.[1]

What followed? "Children!" said John Wesley's mother, "as soon as I am dead, sing a song of praise!" As soon as Wesley himself died, his friends, standing about his corpse, sang:

> "Waiting to receive thy spirit,
> Lo! the Saviour stands above;
> Shows the purchase of His merit,
> Reaches out the crown of love."

And then they knelt down, and prayed, that the mantle of the ascended Elijah might rest upon his followers.[2]

Wesley's remains were interred, behind the chapel in City Road, on the 9th of March. Such was the excitement created by his death, that, within twelve hours only before the funeral took place, it was determined, in order to prevent the assembling of an inconvenient crowd, that the funereal

[1] James Rogers' Life.

[2] "Authentic Narrative," 1791.

1791 Age 88 solemnities should be performed at the early hour of five a.m. The notice to his friends was short; but hundreds attended; and to each one was given a biscuit, in an envelope, engraven with a beautifully executed portrait of the departed, dressed in canonicals, surmounted by a halo and a crown.

Much remains unsaid; but our space is gone. Whilst the present pages are passing through the press, we learn, that "a most eligible site, in Westminster Abbey, has been courteously offered," by the dean of that noble edifice, for the erection of a "public monument" to Wesley and his brother Charles; and that arrangements are being made to secure the services of "a first class sculptor," at the cost of about £800. Thus the wheel turns round. One hundred and thirty years ago, Wesley was shut out of every church in England; now marble medallion profiles of himself and his brother, accompanied with suitable inscriptions, are deemed deserving of a niche in England's grandest cathedral. The man who, a century since, was the best abused man in the British isles, is now hardly ever mentioned but with affectionate respect. In the literature of the age; in its lectures and debates; in chapels and in churches; in synods, congresses, and all sorts of conferences; by the highest lords and the most illustrious commoners, the once persecuted Methodist is now extolled; and the judgment of Southey, in a letter to Wilberforce, is tacitly confirmed: "I consider Wesley as the most influential mind of the last century, —the man who will have produced the greatest effects, centuries, or perhaps millenniums hence, if the present race of men should continue so long."

In person, Wesley was rather below the middle size, but beautifully proportioned, without an atom of superfluous flesh, yet muscular and strong; with a forehead clear and smooth, a bright, penetrating eye, and a lovely face, which retained the freshness of its complexion to the latest period of his life.

In *general* scholarship and knowledge, he had few superiors; whilst such was his acquaintance with the New Testament, that, when at a loss to repeat a text in the words of the authorised translation, he was never at a loss to quote it in the original Greek.

As an author, the chief characteristics of his style are brevity, perspicuity, and strength. He abhorred verboseness, and constantly endeavoured to say everything in the fewest words possible. "I never think," said he, "of my style at all, but just set down the words that come first. Only when I transcribe anything for the press, then I think it my duty to see that every phrase be *clear, pure, proper,* and *easy.* Conciseness, which is now as it were natural to me, brings *quantum sufficit* of strength." Not for want of genius, but for want of time, and for want of disposition to make it otherwise, his style is one of naked and self dependent strength, unaccompanied with gaudy colouring, and equally undiluted with the pretentious puerilities of weak and little minds. It is impossible to abridge his writings without omitting thoughts as well as words. Who can abridge Euclid's Elements without maiming them? And who can take from the works of Wesley without reducing their specific gravity? 1791 Age 88

In the pulpit, Wesley's attitude was graceful and easy; his action calm, natural, pleasing, and expressive; and his voice, not loud, but clear and manly. Whitefield was the greater orator; Wesley the better divine. Wesley's preaching was without Whitefield's Demosthenic eloquence; but it had the accuracy of a scholar, the authority of an ambassador, the unction of a saint, the power of God. It was always searching; but not often terrible and severe, except when addressed to congregations rich, respectable, and polite. "Sir," said a friend to him, after he had preached to a genteel audience from the words, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" "Sir," said Wesley's offended hearer, "such a sermon would have been suitable in Billingsgate; but it was highly improper here"; to whom Wesley quietly, but significantly, remarked: "If I had been in Billingsgate, my text should have been, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.'" The poor need to be told the terribleness of their danger, and the rich more; but, unfortunately, the poor hear most of this, and the rich least. Wesley was a faithful minister to both.

In social life, Wesley was a Christian gentleman, and, with perfect ease, accommodated himself to both the high and low, the rich and poor. Placid, benevolent, and full of anecdote,

1791 Age 88 wit, and wisdom, his conversation was not often equalled; and was generally concluded with two or three verses of a hymn, applicable to what had just been spoken. Though never trifling, he was always cheerful; sometimes saying, "I dare no more *fret* than *curse* or *swear*." His sprightliness among his friends never left him; but was as conspicuous at eighty-seven as at seventeen. He was at home in mansions, and equally in cottages; courteous to all, and especially to the young, often remarking, "I reverence the young, because they may be useful after I am dead."

Of his piety nothing need be said. "His modesty," writes Bradburn, "prevented him saying much concerning his own religious feelings. In public, he hardly ever spoke of the state of his own soul; but, in 1781, he told me that his experience might almost at any time be expressed in the following lines:

'O Thou, who camest from above,
The pure celestial fire to' impart,
Kindle a flame of sacred love
On the mean altar of my heart!

There let it for Thy glory burn,
With inextinguishable blaze,
And trembling to its source return,
In humble love and fervent praise!'"

"His industry is almost without a parallel. In many things, he was gentle and easy to be entreated; but, in his earnestness in redeeming time, he was decisive and inexorable. While kept waiting for his carriage, on one occasion, he passionately exclaimed, "I have lost ten minutes for ever!" "You have no need to be in a hurry!" said a friend: "Hurry," he replied, "I have no time to be in a hurry." It has been calculated, that, during the fifty years of his itinerant ministry, he travelled a quarter of a million of miles, and preached more than forty thousand sermons. In these volumes, we have seen him rising with the lark, travelling with the sun, preaching throughout the three kingdoms, and always acting in harmony with his own well known utterance, "The world is my parish!" Looking at his travelling, the marvel is how he found time to write; and, looking at his books, the marvel is how he found time to preach. His hands were always full;

but his action was never fluttered. He was always moving, and yet, in the midst of his ceaseless toils, betraying no more bustle than a planet in its course. His mission was too great to allow time for trifles. 1791 Age 88

Was Wesley without faults? Not so; no man but "*the Man Christ Jesus*" ever was. Wesley, for instance, was naturally irritable; but even that was better than being apathetic. "Tommy," said Wesley once, "touch that!" pointing to a dock. The itinerant did so. "Do you feel anything?" asked Wesley. "No," replied his friend. "Touch that!" continued Wesley, pointing to a nettle. His companion obeyed, and, in consequence, was stung. "Now, Tommy," remarked Wesley, "some men are like docks; say what you will to them, they are stupid and insensible. Others are like nettles; touch them, and they resent it. Tommy, you are a nettle; and, for my part, I would rather have to do with a nettle than a dock."

Numberless instances of Wesley's wit and repartee might easily be given. "Stop that man from speaking!" exclaimed Charles Wesley at one of the early conferences, when a preacher rose up, and, full of the love of Christ and irrepressible emotion, began to relate his religious experience. "Stop that man from speaking!" said Charles; "let us attend to business!" but still the good man proceeded. "Unless he stops, I 'll leave the conference," continued Charles. Wesley himself, revelling in the itinerant's religious recital, effectually cooled the warmth of his brother's temper by quietly remarking, "Reach him his hat!"

On another occasion, when about to dine with a rich Methodist, one of his preachers, who was present, with more piety than politeness, cried out: "O sir, what a sumptuous dinner! Things are very different to what they were formerly! There is now but little self denial amongst the Methodists!" Wesley pointed to the abundantly furnished table, and then silenced the preacher's untimely eloquence by saying, "My brother, there is a fine opportunity for self denial now."

Thus was Wesley always "instant in season, and out of season." Always and everywhere he was ready to turn passing incidents to practical account. "Pray, sir, let us go,"

1791 Age 88 said one of his friends, whilst two women, near Billingsgate market, were quarrelling most furiously, and using language far more forceful than pious : "Pray, sir, let us go ; I cannot stand it." "Stay, Sammy," replied Wesley, as he looked at the viragoes, who were evidently *inspired*, though not from heaven. "Stay, Sammy," answered the man who had eyes for everything ; "stay, and learn how to preach !"

We must close. Taking him altogether, Wesley is a man *sui generis*. He stands alone : he has had no successor ; no one like him went before ; no contemporary was a coequal. There was a wholeness about the man, such as is rarely seen. His physique, his genius, his wit, his penetration, his judgment, his memory, his beneficence, his religion, his diligence, his conversation, his courteousness, his manners, and his dress, —made him as perfect as we ever expect man to be on this side heaven. "A greater poet may rise than Homer or Milton," writes Dr. Dobbin, "a greater theologian than Calvin, a greater philosopher than Bacon, a greater dramatist than any of ancient or modern fame ; but a more distinguished revivalist of the churches than John Wesley, never." "He was a man," says Lord Macaulay, "whose eloquence and logical acuteness might have rendered him eminent in literature ; whose genius for government was not inferior to that of Richelieu ; and who devoted all his powers, in defiance of obloquy and derision, to what he sincerely considered the highest good of his species."

But, in the case of a man like Wesley, panegyric is out of place. He is one of the very few, whose memory can afford to do without it. His well won and world-wide fame requires no inscription on his monumental marble,—whether in England or in America, in Westminster or in Washington, —more elaborate than this :

JOHN WESLEY,

Born, A.D. 1703.

Died, A.D. 1791.

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